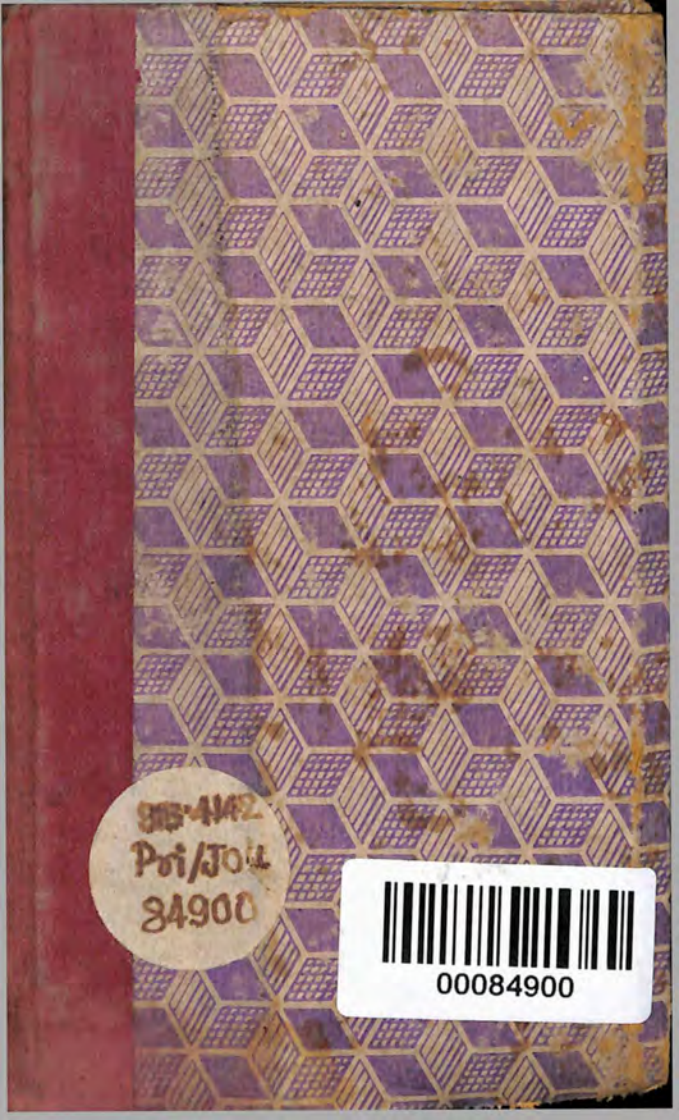
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THE

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE

FROM

CALCUTTA

TO

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND:

COMPRISING

A DESCRIPTION OF THAT COLONY DURING A SIX MONTHS' RESIDENCE.

From Original Letters,

SELECTED BY

MRS. A. PRINSEP.

"But Heaven's high fiat is, that we must part,
And I obey!"——

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER, AND CO. CORNHILL.

1833.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE Letters from which the following pages were compiled, afforded mere passing notices of the places visited, which the abler hand of the lamented writer, had he lived, might have embodied in a shape more fit to engage public attention than can be expected from another, who is unskilled in all that relates to authorship.

As, however, curiosity has of late been awakened respecting some of the scenes described, more especially Van Diemen's Land, it was suggested that even these outlines might possess sufficient interest for the general reader, to justify the editor in overcoming her reluctance to offer them in their present form. The errors of arrangement must rest with herself; while all that can give such a work its substantial importance — namely, the fidelity of the sketches of habits, society, &c. as

taken upon the spot — remains with the writer of the letters, of whose familiar correspondence they form a part.

The delay in publication, occasioned by unforeseen circumstances, will not detract from the value of a book bearing record of Sincapore and Van Diemen's Land, as in such new settlements and colonies, society is not susceptible of very rapid changes; but as it slowly and surely advances, the attention of the mother country is directed with increased interest towards the distant efforts of her offspring, and every notice of a footstep taken in the path of improvement is hailed at home as a matter of cordial concern. In this spirit, then, the present publication, which contains remarks on those and other Eastern settlements, made during a tour in the years 1829 and 1830, is committed to the press.

London, October, 1832.

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JOURNAL

OF

A VOYAGE

FROM

CALCUTTA TO VAN DIEMAN'S LAND.

LETTER I.

Penang, March, 1829.

"ONCE more upon the waters, yet once more," and I care not whither I go, provided it be in the direction of health. To you, my dear Henry, who like to follow me in my wanderings by sea and by land, I again address myself, even at this unpropitious hour, when weakened by sickness. I have put myself, by the advice of my physicians, on board a small country opium ship, trading between Calcutta and China, intending to touch at

Penang, Malacca, and Sincapore, either of which places they recommend as salutary for my complaint; but, should they prove inefficient, I shall, if possible, continue my voyage to the more healthy climate of New South Wales. These places are as new to me as to you, and I intend to make very interested, if not very interesting, observations upon each; as I am to determine at which of these Oriental watering places I shall spend the term of my banishment from Calcutta. You fixtures in England can form no idea of what we poor travellers in the East suffer, when we give up the luxuries of our large airy rooms and cooling punkahs for a small close cabin, in which (should we happen to exceed a moderate stature) we can never stand upright, without endangering our heads, or creating more new organs in the shape of bumps, than the exigences of our situation in life require; and to add still more to our misery, such is the thinness of the deck above us, and the scorching heat of the sun, that one may almost imagine the possibility of a *coup de soleil* through the boards, the thermometer varying from eighty-eight to ninety-one degrees

I sailed in March, 1823, and was fortunate enough to start with a fair wind, which carried the little vessel gaily in two days from the sand heads

at the mouth of the Hoogly, to the entrance of the Straits of Malacca. I repeat not the description of the river Hoogly from Calcutta downwards to Saugor island, having already introduced you to that busy scene when I sent you the journal of my trip to the Burmese coast, in 1826. This time our voyage was so rapid, we had scarcely lost sight of land ere we recovered it again. Having entered the Straits, either on one side the coast of Aracan and Malacca, or on the other, some of the numerous groups of islands were continually in view. The island of Preparis, to the north of the Andamans, gives its name to the narrow channel through which we sailed, and was the first object of interest we approached. Fortunately for me, it was at evening when we did so, as I dared not venture on deck till the sun was down. Nothing, however, could I see but cocoa-nut trees, though I heard much said of coral reefs and dangerous shoals. The next day I was amply compensated for my disappointment by the sight of another island, called Narcondam, rising out of the sea in the form of a pyramid, above the height of 2,000 feet. This being but little covered with vegetation, its rocky sides contrasted boldly with the emerald green of the surrounding islands, and appeared to me, who had been so long tired with

the dull level and jungul of Bengal, as the renewal of an old acquaintance. After a voyage of about thirteen days, we came in sight of Penang, or as it is otherwise called, Prince of Wales's Island; and the captain intending to dispose of part of his cargo here, we stood for the inner passage, the port and town lying on that side. It was about eight o'clock in the morning; the island presented a most beautiful and irregular outline, enveloped in those delicate tints of grey, which, as the sun arose through a humid atmosphere, changed to a beautiful pink. In my younger days I had frequently been puzzled how to understand the proper application of the expression, "rosy fingered Aurora," but now it was most completely illustrated to my mind as well as to my eye, by the soft pink grey which overspread the whole of this lovely mountain. We were about twenty miles distant, and as we approached, the deepening tints became more and more vivid, point after point opening gradually to our view, until the whole extent of the picturesque isle formed one side of our splendid panorama; whilst on the other side, not more than four miles off, the hilly and jungly coast of Queda displayed almost equal beauty, though of a bolder character. The narrowness of his passage, between Penang and the coast of

Malacca, makes the sailing through this part of the straits very interesting; the objects on both sides being always in view. We anchored about six in the evening, after fifteen days' sail from Calcutta. The town (George's Town,) spreads itself naturally over a little point of land, jutting out into the sea, which seems so expressly formed for its establishment, that one can scarcely believe it was with such infinite labour and expence that the East India Company succeeded in making the spot habitable, by clearing away the thick jungul which formerly covered it. At present it is one of the prettiest places I ever saw. The red roofs of the houses glittered in the sun through the surrounding thick foliage of the trees. The pier is very handsomely constructed of stone, with a substantial covering, for the convenience of landing under shelter. On the left of the pier are the large houses and gardens of the government officers; whilst on the right is the little fort, and beyond, the warehouses, shops, and huts, of the lower orders, are thickly crowded together, exhibiting every variety of form; but yet not so thickly crowded nor so various in shape and colour as the swarming inhabitants. People of all nations, Oriental, European, and mixed — Chinese, Dutch, Malay, English, Bengalee, Portu-

guese, and even Negro features, submit themselves to the smiling or astonished gaze of visitors. The captain limited our rovings most provokingly, by not allowing us more than twenty-four hours' leave of absence from the ship; a short time for me to decide whether I would be left on the island or not. Determined to see the most of the place, we set out early on the morrow, to take our survey, braving the piercing rays of the sun. The environs of the town are particularly pretty, the residents, not having such an antipathy to jungul as our Bengal friends, have allowed the trees and flowers to flourish here in tropical luxuriance. A great variety of large trees, shrubs, flowers and fruit is to be found, particularly upon Mount Erskine, the Cintra of the island, where most of the government officers have villas and gardens. These gardens are cultivated almost entirely by the Chinese, and are quite patterns of neatness and excellence of production. It would be worth while for your Horticultural Society to send out one of its members to receive instruction from them. The country houses seldom exceed two stories in height, very frequently not more than one. They are a kind of small raised bungalow, with verandahs shut in by Venetian blinds; no glass windows; and compared with those of India,

deficient in comfort. Kelso, the government bungalow, however, forms, with its garden, an exception, being arranged in remarkably good taste. It is situated on one of the hills overhanging the town, and commands a magnificent view; the harbour below, with its ever-changing scene of shipping, contributing not a little to enliven its beauty. The seabreeze which springs up about eleven or twelve o'clock in the day, is delightfully felt in these upper residences: you may then dispense with Punkahs, and sit *à l'Anglaise*, with the windows open, enjoying the air of heaven, a luxury which those only who like us have so recently escaped the suffocating heat of an Indian climate can duly appreciate. But notwithstanding this tempting advantage, and the generally reputed healthy character of the place, the accounts which I heard of the dampness of the mornings and evenings, made me at once decide to seek farther for a resting place. At these periods of the day, there is almost invariably a great exhalation, which, although the houses are generally raised from the ground, so completely penetrates them, that every article within is thoroughly wet. I can scarcely reconcile this fact with my ideas of a healthy climate, unless the saline atmosphere arising from the sea is a sufficient preservative against the bad effects usu-

ally attendant on damp. The dry months of January and February are the only seasons exempt from these fogs; and I, alas! had come in March.

The different views from the heights must be magnificent, and we were longing to ramble far to the many inviting spots upon them which had been chosen for the numerous dwellings peeping out here and there through the trees, or sometimes even perched up on the very pinnacles of the hills. These are unapprqachable, except upon ponies bred on the mountains of Java. We heard of waterfalls, and of many objects of curiosity, but the only one within our reach was an enormous tree, so large as to make even the loftiest of its own species which surround it, dwindle into comparative insignificance. Its broad stem rises perpendicularly from the ground, 115 feet before its ponderous limbs branch out; and its girth is thirty-seven feet, as high as a man can reach. It is called the Toototum tree by the natives. I am not a sufficient botanist even to tell its species. There are many varieties of fruit on the island, though the agriculturist can grow nothing but rice of an inferior quality; neither wheat, nor barley, nor potatoes, nor any garden vegetable can be reared, and though the sugar

cane thrives, there is neither free population, nor slaves to cultivate and express the juice; the Chinese make enough sugar for their own purposes, but as an article of commerce, Siam undersells every one of these colonies, to say nothing of Bengal. Its pepper is driven from the market by Sumatra and Bencoolen. The island has no mines, nor quarries, nor pearl fisheries, nor any other internal or external source of wealth. In fact, Betel-nut is the only island product, whence its name Pulo-Penang (Isle of Betel-nuts). The population of the place is entirely supported by the annual expenditure of Bengal income, and the employment of Bengal capital; the former in the shape of salaries to public servants, pay, and allowances of troops, and convict maintenance money; the latter Bengal capital, as funds laid out in public works, &c. There are about 15,000 Bengal convicts employed as agricultural labourers and servants, and not more than 10,000 acres cleared and under cultivation, the bulk of which is in gardens, pastures, and house enclosures. Sheep die, bullocks grow thin and miserable, buffaloes look leprous and unwholesome; but these last are the only animals that thrive at all, and are turned to good account: and to support all this, there is an annual drain of from ten to fifteen lacks

of rupees.* Can one be surprised that the authorities at home have sent orders to dissolve this useless presidency: useless now, since the establishment of Sincapore, which, from its position, is the natural emporium of the trade to China and the eastern Archipelago. Lord W. Bentinck had visited Penang, in the Enterprise steam-boat, a short time before I did, and I heard a most ludicrous account of his unexpected arrival at midnight, on the 6th of March; his signal guns, at first unnoticed, or only taken for those of pirates, till their repetition at length awoke the master-attendant, who tumbled out of his bed to know the cause of alarm; and when his boat brought him alongside, he was nearly scared out of his senses to hear that his excellency the Governor-general had silently crept into the harbour at night, against wind and tide: the inhabitants too, next morning, rubbed their eyes with equal astonishment to see a steamer in the roads, and the Governor-general's flag flying at the mast-head; civilians and soldiers jumping up in double-quick time, donning their blue and red coats, setting the guns firing and the drums beating, to prepare for the landing of his Lordship and suite at seven o'clock; and after all this exertion, his Lordship as speedily departed; the

* Equal to about £100,000 or £150,000 sterling.

Governor, the Chief Justice of Penang, and the Council, beiug all absent on their annual circuit. The same scene was acted three days after at Malacca, where Lord William likewise arrived at midnight; but here he was received by the Governor of Penang, who was, indeed, whilst taking his early morning's walk, the first person to recognise the Enterprise steam-vessel, in which the Governor-general was expected. But to return to myself, whom I left I scarce know where,—and you I fear will equally forget my existence unless I recall myself to your mind—I was looking with admiration at that magnificent giant of the forest, and intended enjoying a few more views from the heights, when I discovered below, that the Captain had hung out the signal of the Blue Peter. I descended with all speed, and finding myself one of the first of our rambling party to return, I have been scribbling these my remarks on Penang for your benefit, intending to leave the letter here to take its chance for England, either by Bengal, or through the Straits of Sunda. We are all on board, and heaving the anchor.—Adieu.

LETTER II.

MALACCA AND SINCAPORE.

On board the ——, 1829.

[*Sailing down the Straits of Malacca.*]

As I really cannot stand upright in my cabin, I am even condemned to sit at my table and amuse myself with my writing case, the vicinity of which tempts me to relieve my idleness by pulling out sheet after sheet of paper; my hand is mechanically covering each with a description of what is passing before my eyes. I gaze with regret at the pretty houses of Penang as we sail away, thinking how soon they are likely to fall into ruin, and the jungul to resume its gloomy dominion. The population having only hitherto subsisted *upon* the Government, when that government is reduced to a subordinate residency, the population must be reduced in proportion, or

starve—the only alternative. It will soon become what Malacca now is, a miserably deserted place. The Captain had intended touching at Malacca, but the breeze is so favourable, though strong for continuing down the Straits, that you must be contented with the description I hear from others of that ancient settlement of the Portuguese. In fact, we lose not much, if the account be true, that there is nothing to be seen but the ruins of heavy Dutch houses, inhabited by a dull race, descendants of the first settlers, in whose snub-nosed faces even the Dutch features become degenerated into Malay. There are to be found also a few wooden veranda'ed bungaloes, for the civil and military who hold the place under the mighty government of Penang, it having long since fallen under our authority;* but except its fruits, I hear of nothing to recommend it. It is, however, not the season of that queen of fruits, the mangosteen, so we are the more easily reconciled to passing it without a visit. It is one of the oldest monuments of European enterprize in the East, the Portuguese having settled there in 1511, and with its name had been associated, in

* Malacca settled by Malays from Sincapore, in 1252; turned to Mahommedanism, in 1276; conquered by the Portuguese, 1511; conquered by the Dutch, 1640; conquered by the British, 1795.

my imagination, all pleasant dreams of fruits, spices, summer groves and shades! The fruits alone remain: of these there are eighty or ninety different kinds, which are sent to all the neighbouring places, even as far as Sincapore. The anchorage is several miles off the town, which adds to its inconvenience as a port.

But leave this ruinous place, or at least only gaze on it from a distance, as we do, and sail with me down this beautiful land-locked sea, beautiful even now in its anger. A sudden storm of thunder and lightning has come on, and we see two water-spouts in the distance. These storms are as sudden and as violent while they last, as those in the Mediterranean, and equally short; there are not unfrequently as many as five or six, in the course of twenty-four hours. At this season of the year, especially, the thunder and lightning are awfully terrific, and to an inexperienced person fearfully so; but the China captains hail them with delight, as the wind accompanying them always comes from the favourable quarter, and setting as much canvass as the ship can carry, she scuds away before it at the rate of twelve knots an hour. We, the poor passengers, could willingly dispense with the rain, which is pouring down much more profusely than agreeably.

This is now the fourth day since we quitted Penang. We were enabled, the wind proving so favourable, to pass through the south eastern-channel, which is seldom attempted on account of the numerous shoals. The weather is calm to-day, and the captain has been pointing out a phenomenon, which is peculiar I believe to these straits: it is a partial ripple, extending some distance over the surface of the water, though by no means similar to that usually termed by the sailors 'Cat's paw.' You hear its splashing sound as it approaches, still more distinct and loud as it passes the vessel, and it is sometimes so strong as to be sensibly felt by all on board, making an amazing commotion, like that occasioned by a steam boat. It is the more extraordinary, being unaccompanied by either wind or tide, and is most common in calm weather.

We are now nearly abreast of the southernmost point of the peninsula of Malacca, consequently all eyes on board are straining to discover the entrance to the Straits of Sincapore. The wind has provokingly shifted, and we have anchored for the night; our cautious captain not thinking it safe to continue threading this labyrinth of islets during the darkness. We are within these beautiful straits all studded with numberless green islands like gems. Imagine yourself sailing along in the smoothest of

seas, with the sweetest of breezes on your quarter; around you isles of all sizes, forms, and indeed colours,—for the sun, playing at hide and seek, with white, as well as with showery clouds, tints them in turns with all hues, both the near and distant ones, ever varying. As I contemplate them from the deck, I fancy a possible change fifty years hence,—villages scattered on some, steeples rising over others, batteries on the bold ones, villas on the undulating. Altogether it is the most beautiful voyage I ever made; but were it as my imagination painted it, it would be superlative! Such has been this evening's sail.

The night has closed around, and all these beauties have vanished from our sight; but now another sense is awakened to pleasure, and reminds us that we are near a land of spices: even at this distance of five miles, where we lay, the rich perfume of the aromatic trees and shrubs is wafted to us by the gentle breeze, recalling to our memory those Oriental tales we loved to dwell upon in childhood. I shall go and dream of them.

Good night.

SINCAPORE—(*March.*)

At length I have reached this infant Hercules of commerce, which has already strangled the two snakes, Penang and Malacca, that thought to eat him up in his cradle. The island of Sincapore lies at the extremity of the scraggy peninsula of Malacca, divided from it by a very narrow channel, only navigable for small boats, and forms a kind of centre to the countless islands around. Some of these are so extremely small, that it is a matter of surprise that they can resist the force of the waves for a day. I heard, indeed, many wonderful stories in the cuddy, of the sudden changes that take place amongst them ; of new ones continually forming, encreasing, and afterwards diminishing again in an incredibly short space of time. Early this morning we weighed anchor, but made little progress, in consequence of the lightness of the wind. We passed two or three cultivated isles, and at last, turning abruptly round a rocky corner, the little beach of Sincapore, with its white buildings, its cocoa-nut-trees, and its fleet of ships and China junks, opened like a stage scene upon our eyes. In an instant we were surrounded by a hundred boats, loaded with shells and coral for sale. The first ap-

pearance of this place from the sea pleased me even more than Penang, with its cheerful row of detached houses along the beach, each within its neat little enclosure, and the small hills rising behind, topped with bungalows, all open to the sea and sea-breeze; but when you see the whole settlement, you heave a sigh at its insignificant extent, and feel what a prison it is! The perseverance of commerce has been well proved in this place. In the year 1816, the island consisted of a few little hills, covered with the thickest forest, as well as brush jungul and swamps of sea-water, around their feet. And such jungul as it was, and still is, except in the small spots that are cleared. Those who have only seen junguls in Hindostan or the Dukhun know not the character of these impenetrable regions. Every hill is uniformly covered with foliage from top to bottom, which is equally thick above as the under-wood is impervious below. The difficulty of clearing this is immense. The swamp, too, is another evil to be corrected. As yet only about four square miles on the beach have been partially filled up with sand from the sea, and gravel from the hills, and this forms the foundation of the town, the cantonment, and all the respectable houses in the precincts. In such a situation who would have

thought the place could be healthy? Yet so it is. The inhabitants are all robust, possessing European complexions, such as I never before witnessed in a hot climate, and here we are only one degree from the line! The thermometer has never been known to fall below seventy-nine, and yet the air of the sea gains a victory every day over heat, swamp, and jungul.

Sincapore has become quite the fashionable resort of Calcutta invalids, and seeing the effects so marked upon all their countenances, I will give it the chance of beautifying my own. Prison as it is in extent, if it succeeds in this, I shall think it sufficiently agreeable to reside in, even for six whole months. But I must look out for some dwelling to receive me, and write again when I am more acquainted with localities.

SINCAPORE.—(*April.*)

I promised you another letter soon after my arrival here, and when time had given a little more experience to my judgment than one day could mature. But in truth it takes not long to survey this place externally and internally, nor to describe the same, leaving commerce out of the question. Were I to enter upon this latter topic, indeed, I might make a Sir Stamford Raffles'

book in size, had I the same capacity for collecting and embodying information, and had he not done it before me. To him, therefore, I refer you for the history of the first settlement of this place, and I will only give you the description of what it now appears to a superficial observer like myself. But ere we walk round the town, I beseech you take a view from my window. An open beach, on which the blue sea never rolls otherwise than gently, and which is peopled with grotesque though scanty groupes of Chinese, Malays, and demi-English, forms the foreground. The smooth sea itself, almost shining blue under this fine sun, summer sky, and Eden breeze, is filled with ships from England, Calcutta, China, and Lisbon, and with junks and proas from Java, Sumatra, Cochin-China, and Macao, of every shape and colour. At a distance there is a beautifully variegated frame of green islands, which seems to hug the ocean into a lake. Have I not well chosen my point of sight? But come, now, let us to the Esplanade, for here we may walk out and brave the sun with impunity, protected solely by an umbrella. Many even make pic-nic parties upon the water, and indulge in the freedoms and rural amusements of England. The beach, with its cottages and lawns, may remind you of an English

watering place; but unhappily you are soon undeceived by following the road a mile either to the right or left. That to the right, after passing this pretty Esplanade and Lilliputian fort, leads to the town. A little muddy river runs into the bay, and is covered with an infinite number of Chinese and Malay boats, busily employed in the traffic to and from the junks and merchant-vessels in the harbour. Cross this river on a crazy, tottering, wooden bridge, and you will find on each side of you a salt marsh, out of which rise hundreds of buildings, standing, as it were, upon stilts, ten or twelve feet above the mud, which is covered by the tide only at high water; a raised causeway through this leads to the rest of the town, which is built substantially on *terra firma*, but more than half is on these piles. This artificial elevation, and the streets or canals being of a tolerable width, give the town a more important appearance than it otherwise would have. Great numbers of Chinese live in these wretched looking boxes (houses I cannot call them); their only entrance is by a narrow plank from the causeway, over which dangerous pathway the inmates and even the little children are continually running. Most of them are shops in which the owners may constantly be seen, indifferent to the inconveniences of their

situation, pursuing merrily their various occupations. They are excellent carpenters, and the island furnishes some very beautiful specimens of wood, particularly well adapted for ornamental household furniture. The Chinese inhabitants far exceed the Malays in number; they come down from the coasts of China and Siam in swarms, insomuch that they and their descendants have become too numerous to find subsistence here in an honest way, and have recourse to theft, in which they are great adepts. This they practise almost without restraint, such is the indolence and carelessness of the police, who in some rather violent tussels having allowed the offenders to gain the advantage, they have acquired so much boldness, that scarcely a night passes without some depredation being committed. Not many months since, in consequence of a very abundant sugar crop, in the Isle of France, which required more additional labour than could be supplied by the slaves of that Island, the governor, Sir Charles Colville, wrote to the government of Penang and Sincapore, to induce some of the Chinese to go down and settle there. Eight hundred of these idlers very readily complied, and were shipped off to the Isle of France, without making any apparent reduction in their numbers here. I never

in my life heard such a buzz of human voices; and to these add the jingle and chattering of thousands of parrots and monkeys, brought here for sale from all parts of the Eastern Archipelago — you will, no doubt, agree with me in making the most speedy retreat from this Babel. The whole extent of the road being not more than three miles, our walk will not be far to the English quarter. Behind the row of detached Bungalows on the beach the ground is still unredeemed from swamps, and is inundated at every tide. From this rise three or four little hills, like islands on a lake, upon which are built some very pretty villas commanding a delightful prospect of the harbour. Great pains have been taken in forming and ornamenting the gardens attached to them, but to little or no purpose; for the hills are mere rocks with scarcely sufficient soil for the raising of a few vegetables. The low grounds are equally unfit for cultivation, though from a very different cause. They are thickly covered with an unwholesome vegetation, producing at night such noxious vapours, that the inhabitants are obliged to close their doors and windows as securely as if they were in danger of an attack from wild beasts. But who can calculate upon the effects of malaria? Here, in the very focus of its production, it is an

'extraordinary fact, that not a death from local 'sickness has taken place among the residents for years. In the day-time all the rooms are opened as much as possible to the sea breezes, which at this, the coolest season of the year, occasionally recals to my memory the luxurious feeling of a warm day by the sea-side in Devonshire. But if there be little variety of amusement on shore, the sea and harbour, with its multitude of vessels of all descriptions, is a never-failing source of interest and entertainment. During the fortnight I have been here, two or three ships have either sailed out or in every day. The Chinese junks are the greatest novelty to me. You may have received from pictures some notion of their singular appearance; but I confess, though I had often seen them depicted, the reality is still more curious than any preconceived idea of them. The extreme brightness of the colours, all of the gayest hue, and so painted as to resemble the richest satins and brocades; the extraordinary, unintelligible devices, conspicuously displayed on every part, combined with their strange forms, are so truly Oriental, and unlike what I have ever seen before, that I am never weary of gazing on them. The prows and sterns are built of so unusual a shape, and so like each other, it is difficult

to distinguish them, were it not for a large eye painted on the former, to enable the ship to see her true course; but, for aught I see, they might go equally well either way. It is a matter of surprise how such heavy and awkwardly-built machines, for all purposes of sailing, can ever be made to answer the helm with any precision at all, and still more how they perform their voyages in safety, especially in the narrow China seas, which are subject to such dreadful storms, locally called *tofauns*, as to disable many a well-appointed European ship. The commanders of these Chinese trading vessels are destitute of all scientific knowledge in navigation: they have neither chart nor book; the only nautical instrument by which they direct their course being the compass. Of this, however, they make so little use, that, like the ancients, they keep as near as possible to the coast. There are at least fifty of these junks lying now in the harbour, most of them from Siam, some of a very considerable size. They touch at all the islands, carrying on some description of trade at every port; being laden with sugar, coffee, tea, raw silk, tin, spices, elephants' teeth, camphor, &c.; and return laden with Bengal and Madras cloths, cambrics, camlets, woollens, gold dust, &c. Though there is a pro-

hibition against the importation of opium into the kingdom of Siam, they contrive to smuggle a few chests on board; the enormous profit gained, if they succeed, compensating, as usual, for all the risk hazarded.

This place is so directly in the course between Bengal, Madras, Bombay, and China, that the harbour is constantly full of Indiamen, large and small.* Most of the Bengal captains bring down sheep with them, which sell at an enormous price. I forgot to say, that there is not an acre of pasturage here for cattle of any description. No quadrupeds are to be seen but horses, dogs, pigs, and goats. With the utmost care a sheep can scarcely be kept alive here longer than a month. Provisions of every description are extremely dear; fish, pork, and fowl, are the principal articles of consumption, with rice. Fish, in great variety, is found in these straits. Pork is reared with success by the Chinese; and poultry and rice are brought from Java and the surrounding islands. Vegetables, as I mentioned before, are not to be grown, even upon the hills, in sufficient quantity to supply the market. I have omitted, however, one great delicacy, at least it is so considered by the Chinese, who rear them in great abundance for their own tables, viz. puppies! Malacca, though at a dis-

tance of a hundred miles, supplies Sincapore in profusion with fruits of delicious flavour, and of so many different kinds, that I have not as yet learned all their names. Oranges, pumalos, mangoes, plantains, pine-apples, custard-apples, leechees, loquots, are brought in perfection; and at length I have tasted the mangosteen, which alone would supply the place of all. I need say no more than that, high as my expectations had been raised, its great fame was noways exaggerated. It is about as large as a moderate-sized apple, having a very thick rind, which, when cut, yields a red juice, and is employed, I believe, as a dye. The fruit within is disposed in compartments, like an orange, and has a pulp, of a snow-white appearance, of the most refreshing, uncloying sweet you can imagine.

In point of society, I am better off than I should be at almost any interior station of India. There is an amazing number of merchants, and no less than nine lady-families. The late visit of Lord W. Bentinck is, with them, as at Penang, still the topic of conversation. Not that he passed sentence of death upon this place, as he did upon the other; on the contrary, Sincapore will flourish the more under the new regulations. The consterna-

tion his visit occasioned would have made one suppose the very reverse. Lord William, eager as usual to see every thing, and to ride about the place, was just stepping into his boat, when off came the principal authorities in great fuss and haste, entreating him not to land, as they had no dinner, no horses, no vehicles nor conveyance of any kind, not even a bed to offer him. And the next day even, such was the poverty of the place, that the captain of the *Enterprize* steam-boat (Johnston) positively sent his own equipage on shore for the governor, and entertained the civil authorities on his service of plate. I am in the house of ————, well known to Palmer and Co., of Calcutta, who is also a *cidevant* inhabitant of Clifton, near Bristol; so we talk old places over together. I have also found other persons, acquainted with our Essex friends; and what with reading and writing, and looking from my window towards the harbour, I contrive to pass my time as well as I can, away from all I hold most dear. One point about this place, however, seems to be misunderstood: I was sent here because the climate was supposed to be so dry — yet not a day has passed without floods of rain, and such, I am told, it is throughout the year!

I see a large ship coming in, apparently a Chinaman from England or Bengal: I hasten to inquire for letters and news, so must take leave of you. Whether I have given you a pleasant or disagreeable impression of Sincapore, let me know a year hence. Alas! it cannot be sooner!

LETTER III.

Batavia, June, 1829.

After my last cheerful letter, from Sincapore, in which I felt so resigned to that place of exile, you will wonder that I left it; especially as my wife soon after joined me there, bringing with her presence, all the dear comforts of home. You will be still more surprised that I should come to this proverbially unhealthy colony. But ere you condemn my indiscretion, listen a while to my case, and you will see the urgency of our removal from the comparatively healthy settlement of Sincapore to this stagnant dépôt of Dutch commerce. I have had a severe relapse, from which nothing could recover me but an instantaneous sea voyage; and if, by possibility, it could be made to the more temperate climates of Australia, so much the bet-

ter. We knew the Flora, from Calcutta to Van Diemen's Land and Sidney, was to call at Batavia on the way, and fearing to lose the chance of meeting her here, we took the first tolerably sized cabin we could find amongst the three or four small vessels that were going to Java from Sincapore. Miserable enough, in truth, was our passage, to say nothing of other troubles since our arrival here, which have almost made us forget the past ones.

Our schooner was but 112 tons, full of rats and cockroaches; the monsoon was over for carrying us down the Straits of Rhio and Banca: nearly every night, and every tide, we lay at anchor, without one favouring breeze to cool us, or to carry us on. Eighteen days were thus consumed, under a heat in the cabin of ninety degrees and upwards. On leaving the Straits of Banca we experienced a violent storm, which lasted twelve hours, more than time enough to make us fully sensible not only of the extreme frailty of our boat, but of the total inefficiency of our crew, who could not reef the topsail without bringing the ship to and anchoring. Fortunately, two days after this, twenty-two days from Sincapore, when we had just eaten our last chicken, and emptied our last water-cask, we at length came in sight of

Java, the captain looking out for Sumatra! Our desire to land was too great to allow us calmly to admire the magnificent mountains, with their fanciful volcanic peaks, one of them still smoking; or to look at the thousand islands, as they are called, of the harbour. A brisk wind carried us in, and we were ready to jump into the first boat which should appear, when the wind failed, and prevented our reaching the anchorage till late in the afternoon. We were in a Dutch settlement, and after a certain hour, no boats are allowed to land passengers except the government boat, which to us was unattainable; so we were literally doomed to the horrors of Tantalus, with one evil (in addition) he had not, viz., a pestilential air; for such is reckoned that of the Batavia Roads. A long marsh lies between the town and the sea, from whence arise all the exhalations which make both so unhealthy.

Explain who can, why this should be so here, and not so at Sincapore. Is it the difference of aspect—that facing the south, this the north? Speculations of this kind, however, troubled us not that miserable night. We passed it in expectation that the letters we sent on shore would procure us an hospitable reception in some house the next morning. No such good thing, how-

ever, occurred to us, as you will see presently. I verily believe it was with the mere desire of encreasing our torments, so many hundreds of boats would come in and out of the river from between the long quays — so many Malay proas too, with their elegant sails skimming before the wind, though we could scarcely feel the breeze that carried them! Ships with ensigns of many different nations were there also; but what was that gay sight to us, to whom a mere cockle shell would have been more welcome, provided it came to take us ashore!

At six o'clock the following morning, our penance was concluded by the approach of a boat and some new friends our letters had procured us, who kindly came this distance to escort us ashore. You may suppose our passage to the landing-place was attended with some inconvenience, when you hear that the boat had no protection from the scorching rays of the hot morning sun; for the slight awning over head did not shield us from them. We were three miles from the mouth of the river, and five from the town where we were to land. The river abounds with alligators, of which I had the pleasure of seeing six in this short trip. I understand, in some places they are so bold as even to snatch people out of the boats, an instance you

never hear of in Bengal. There is a bar at the mouth of the river, over which the water is so shallow, that loaded boats can only pass at high tide; for which reason two long quays are built on either side of the entrance, a considerable way into the sea, for the convenience of towing the boats over the bar, when the tide is running down, the tide not lasting long enough to carry loaded boats to the town; indeed, there is so little water in the river, that during the greater part of the twenty-four hours, it is nearly dry, leaving the muddy banks, with the refuse of a most populous and dirty town, to poison the air. We were accordingly dragged up against the stream. In our way I observed some remains of the old Dutch fortifications still standing in the morass. At the landing-place in the town, we found carriages waiting for us, not covered palankeen carriages, or even chariots, to shelter us from the sun, which had now become intense, but open phaetons, with a dicky and coachman. These were drawn by the pretty little ponies of the country, and driven by Malays in the native dress, viz.; a linen frock, loose trowsers, and a handkerchief tied round the head. We drove so quickly through the town and its populous bazaars, that I can say but little of it, and its unwholesome canals and

rows of trees; the suburbs seemed to contain many large square houses, precisely in the old Dutch style, with their formal gardens. I have never had the strength, nor even the wish to visit it since, from our residence, five miles distant. I heard that many of the canals have been filled up lately, and the trees cut down, and that the town has become more healthy in consequence. We stopped not our drive till we came to our new friend's house, a very pretty raised bungalow, quite in the Anglo-Indian style, where we hoped our fatigues were to terminate, for we were truly in need of repose; but alas! great was our disappointment and dismay, when after a hospitable breakfast, we were made to understand, with many apologies, we could not be accommodated in his house; and we were conducted through the burning sun some distance back to the hotel. This hotel had a handsome appearance, but was under repair. Four rooms over a coach-house, to which we were obliged to mount by a ladder instead of a stair-case, with barely furniture for our use, was all they had to offer us; and for this and our board we had to pay twenty-five Java rupees, worth about as many English shillings, a-day! We were told at Sincapore we should live at Batavia for nothing. Here we are then in this mi-

serable lodging, the rooms all opening into a narrow gallery, on which the sun blazes the whole day, and with none but Malays to attend us, whose language we cannot understand; myself too weak to move, and my wife at present almost equally so. With all these discomforts, you surely cannot wonder at the grumbling tone of my epistle, nor that I look with so unfavourable an eye upon Batavia—it is almost worse than our late ship, but that we have something to eat. The rains pursue us; at Sincapore it was an unusually wet season, and here they tell us the same thing: oh, for the arrival of the Flora!

June 20th—After four days of the misery detailed above, a kind friend did take pity on our forlorn condition, and took us into her house till we could find a separate domicile. We were induced to seek for this, when we heard the Flora was not likely to come for a month; and after some little trouble, we are now established about five miles from town, in the only cottage we could find to hire for so short a period. Crazy old thing as it is, we are too glad to have a quiet home to ourselves, to complain. We have had every thing to find, from a bed to a tea-cup, besides servants. The house they say costs nothing, though we pay 120 rupees a month for it; but if rent be dear,

I cannot say that provisions are, at least those that are to be had, which can scarcely be said to include butcher's meat; there are but two butchers; no such thing as beef; mutton, Cape mutton as they call it, most execrable. There is no good pasturage at Java for cattle, not even in the interior. The cows seldom yield more than a quart of milk daily, consequently this is difficult to procure, and butter hardly attainable. You will laugh at my having stated provisions were cheap, when I am making so many exceptions — now for the list of articles of consumption, which conform to my rule. All kinds of poultry, fish, vegetables, and fruit. The Malays are famous for raising poultry, which you may see them constantly carrying about for sale, slung by their legs to a long pole upon their shoulders. A turkey may be had for a Java rupee, and a dozen of fowls for two rupees. These we buy, and fatten for our table, in the farm-yard behind us. For fish, which is abundant in variety, and excellent in kind, we send to the town market every day. The vegetables and fruits are magnificent: there are even more species of the latter than at Malacca; a cart-load of pine-apples may be bought for one rupee, and so on in proportion.

The situation of our cottage is so extremely pret-

ty, that were it not for the deluges of rain which pour down almost incessantly, we might do nothing but admire the views from our windows. In the front is Koning's Plain, a large open space, whereon is the race-course, surrounded with houses and bungalows in pretty gardens and plantations, the coffee being one of the most conspicuous amongst the ornamental shrubs. Upon this plain, the troops are exercised every morning, preparatory to their joining the unfortunate army which is waging an unequal war against the natives. The cavalry look ridiculous with their heavy costume, mounted upon the Lilliputian horses of the country. The mortality amongst the troops is dreadful, they say only about half survive the passage hither from Europe, of which two-thirds die within the first month, from intoxication, on their march into the interior. The back of our house is very picturesque; we look on a Malay village, or campong, which belongs to our landlord. The neat bamboo huts, the prolific gardens, shaded by the graceful cocoa, and the splendid tamarind trees, form altogether a charming picture of rural happiness. The natives seem a quiet, inoffensive, industrious race. An overseer, called a mandor, regulates every thing in these campongs. Each person in this village has a small piece of ground

allotted to himself, which he cultivates chiefly with areca, a leaf they chew with a mixture of betel nut, tobacco, lime, and opium. They also plant fruit-trees, the produce of which is their own property, and descends from generation to generation, unless forfeited by misconduct, an event of rare occurrence, and to which is attached the additional penalty of expulsion from the campong. The rest of the ground is sown with seed by any one who chooses to do so, and the produce is divided into fifths; one-fifth to the proprietor, one-fifth to the government, one-fifth to the people who reap, and two-fifths to the person who sows the seed. In this manner each peasant who reaps gains a sufficiency of grain, generally rice, to support his family (or rather her family, as it is always women who reap) the whole season.

The governor's town residence is very near us; a dismal-looking house, buried in tall trees, on the bank of the river. No appearance of a court, or even of business, ever seems to enliven its cheerless walls. We meet the governor occasionally in our rides, drawn in an old barouche, with six greys. There are few remnants of this once gay and numerous society; for gay we are assured it was, though Dutch, when the colony was in prosperity. The Harmonie, a large building for-

merly used for assemblies, and containing many magnificent saloons and billiard-rooms, is now almost deserted. Sincapore altogether offers as complete a contrast to Batavia as can well be imagined. There youthful vigour and enterprize, here the decrepitude and torpor of old age. I declare I feel the latter creeping over myself since I have been here, arising, I presume, from the malaria of Batavia. The only place where we have seen any of the Dutch society, is at the evening promenade on the Champ de Mars, near us, where a very good military band plays twice a-week. The greater number appear, from their unpolished manners, of a very secondary rank in society. The women are extremely ugly, retaining their proverbial rotundity even in Java, and dressed as if they belonged to the last century, with tight low dresses and short sleeves; their hair tucked up in small curls, with a coquettish little orange-flower or rose stuck on one side, and not a shawl or handkerchief to conceal their dusky complexions. The vehicles in which they drive are as antiquated as their own appearance; behind each carriage the servant holds a piece of lighted tow, to light his master's cigar the instant they arrive on the course. The ladies who have no carriages saunter along the

road, or in their gardens, dressed in a loose gown, which completely conceals their figure. The Champ de Mars has lately been christened Wilhelm's Plain, and a pillar erected upon it, with an inscription, in honour of *their* victory at Waterloo! There is also a very handsome building, half built, intended for the residence of officers under government; but the colony is now in such a declining state, that it probably will never be finished. The cantonments are very neat rows of cottages, built round the plain and along the side of the high road which crosses it. They have all verandahs, and are prettily shaded with avenues of trees.

I went the other day to see a very curious exhibition of the natural and manufactured productions of the island, and was very much pleased with the proofs it afforded of the industry and ingenuity of the natives. Rewards are given for the best specimens of both kinds they produce. Printed linens are used for the saruns or petticoats of the Javanese, from the lowest to the highest rank, the richness of the pattern increasing accordingly; some wrought with gold thread, and all more or less fabricated for display. The chased gold ornaments, the models of Javanese and Chinese houses, &c. were very creditable to the state of the arts among this people. There were also

samples of the finest natural productions in rice, coffee, and other sorts of grain; also many of those esculent birds' nests, the Chinese are so fond of eating, which are found in thousands in the caves of the southern rocky coast, in which the swallows build.

The southern and western coasts of Java are principally inhabited by the Malays and Chinese, who have, as it were, driven the original inhabitants into the interior. The Dutch are only the rulers; and, like the English in India, bear no proportion to the natives of the country. Moreover, their empire here, and throughout the Eastern Islands, is everywhere on the decline. The Chinese at Java are a very superior class to those at Sincapore. They are very numerous, and seem to engross the whole trade of linens and woollens. Numbers are to be seen following the profession of pedlars in a very gentlemanly style, holding an umbrella over their heads, whilst a cooly behind them carries the goods, strung in baskets to a pole, across his shoulders. The Chinese are also the only handicraftsmen in Batavia, such as carpenters, coachmakers, shoemakers, &c. The English are reduced to a very small number, only seven or eight resident merchants; of these only two have their families with them, and they are soon going, such is the effect

of the jealousy with which they are viewed by the Dutch. As a proof of the poverty of the country, there is scarcely a silver coin in circulation — nothing but copper. We are much tempted to make an excursion to Buitenzorg, the governor's country seat, which is about thirty-five miles off, and which, they tell us, is most beautifully situated upon the first range of mountains, where the air is so delightfully cool and fresh, while we below are stifled. The roads are good, the ponies capital, the Malay drivers expeditious, and posthouses every eight or ten miles; but there is no sort of inn, and no possibility of sleeping on the road, which we should require, even for that short distance; therefore we fear it is impossible for us to accomplish it, and we must be content to remain quietly where we are, thankful if we can but preserve the little strength we have remaining till we can remove to a more invigorating climate. You must be nearly as much tired by my long description of Batavia, as I am by my protracted residence. I 'll write no more till I can tell you when we leave.

August 14.

The *Flora* is waiting for us to go on board. It has been detained a fortnight. Pray for a prosperous voyage.

LETTER IV.

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

Newtown, Nov. 1829.

My Dear Henry,

It feels as strange to me as it must sound to you, that I should be sent to this southernmost city of the globe to recover my lost health. But here indeed I am, at Hobarton, and to complete the graphic sketches of my Eastern travels, which I take for granted you have received, I shall now send you a brief account of my voyage to this place, and of my first impressions on arriving.—Knowing how little your fancy is accustomed to follow the transported thieves in their exile, and how gloomy a place the character of such inhabitants makes this country appear, I have no doubt that the description will not only interest but

surprise you. It sounded like a *firmaun* (sentence) to quit the world altogether, when I was first told to come here; and whilst tossing about on the rough back of the south seas, my voyage seemed verily as if it led to some infernal country of torments. But what a change now! the most magnificent prospect stretched before my eyes, and the purest air in the world cooling and refreshing my weak frame, so long exhausted by tropical climates. But you shall approach Van Diemen's Land with myself.

On the 17th of August we sailed out of Batavia Roads in a small trader, not quite 300 tons burthen, a mere nutshell; but there are so few opportunities of communication between Batavia and this place, that we were right glad to avail ourselves of this, to escape from a sultry atmosphere; loaded with continual rain. It is true there were inconveniences enough on board, our vessel being so extremely small and of a short broad build, pitched furiously; moreover having been employed in the China trade, and between the Spice Islands and Java, it was only adapted to warm climates, and had not even the comfort of one glass window to exclude the bitter breeze which soon sprung up. But in spite of these inconveniences we felt thankful for the change, and bright anticipations hung

over the future; so on we went. We lay off the little Dutch fort of Angir, in the Straits of Sunda, for a day, but the delay was fully compensated by the beauty of the situation; and the time quickly passed in watching the animated scene. The sea was covered with hundreds of boats, vying with each other in rapidity to reach the vessels lying at anchor in this place of rendezous. We were soon surrounded by the natives, bringing quantities of fruits, mats, shells, and all sorts of trifles, to tempt the crew, who were Lascars: poor creatures! could they have formed but the least anticipation of the cold and wet they were soon to encounter, not many of them would have been willing to proceed further. There were very few vessels lying here, at first, but two large Chinamen came in during our stay, bringing to us exiles the most joyful and the very latest intelligence from England. Angir is but a miserable town, although from the ship it looked well, with its bold background of mountains. I sincerely regretted, in this my last peep at the Java mountains, that I had not been able to make myself better acquainted with this island, so interesting in its natural beauties and productions, and in the relation it had so lately occupied with our own.

We availed ourselves of the evening breeze,

which gradually sprung up, to unfurl our sails; the lessening shores of Java and Sumatra receded from our view as we glided gently through the calm smooth sea, till at length the sun set in full glory behind the magnificent mountain which capes the southernmost point of Sumatra, then standing in dark relief before a blaze of golden light; and thus splendidly, I took my leave of the tropics.

What a change in climate the day following! The south-east trade-wind caught our sails the moment we passed from under the lee of the land, and immediately began such pitching and plunging, that all recollections I had retained of the terrific seas between the Cape of Good Hope and Madagascar, were completely supplanted by the present uneasy sensations. The whole Southern Ocean, from the very Pole itself, let loose upon us! Not one breakwater of an island to check its tumultuous roll! The first effect was to drive me to my cot; by the time I recovered, we had passed the tropic, so quickly had we travelled, and the next change was from heat to cold. In three days we sailed down thirty degrees of the thermometer, —from eighty to fifty. Shivering came all over us; great coats, double, nay, treble,—blankets, flannels, and worsted stockings, were but thin ar-

mour against the cold, to skin that had so lately been parched with heat. On we went, tossing over these stormy seas, which grew worse and worse, and were the emblem of never ending winter. We had intended to visit the emigrants of Swan River; but when we came on the same latitude, the wind, which had now changed to west, was too violent for us to venture towards a lee shore, and we passed round the south-western cape of New Holland, without seeing anything like land. From that longitude we close-reefed our foretopsails, and with one continued gale made the snow-capped mountains of Van Diemen's Land on the 11th morning. We had seen no description of the coast, and the height of the mountains, and above all, their snowy brows, astonished us. Five weeks before, we were melting under the Line; imagine then the change! We had plenty of time for reflecting upon it, being becalmed for the rest of the day under these cold pinnacles, with a bright sun, which, however, was not hot enough to warm the clear icy air that formed a portion of what eternally hovers around the South Pole. The wind came strong off the land at night, and blew us out to sea, but we recovered our distance towards morning, and when I ascended the poop, at seven o'clock, we were

rounding the dark bluff point of Tasman's Head, which looked most grimly out of its cloak of clouds, that flung down a freezing sleet upon our decks, against which the shivering Malays and Lascars, tired of a winter night's work, could scarcely mount the shrouds or tug the braces. The rain, the wind, the steep cold cliffs, might have persuaded us that we were weathering the coast of Cornwall, but for the continued barrenness of the land, nay, of the ocean too, if I may use the expression, for we passed one small skiff, and but one, and that had a dead whale fastened alongside, its blood flooding the decks. Before us lay innumerable islands and bays, and rocks with fearful names; and we were not a little anxious to hail a pilot to direct us through the proper channel. Ere reaching Tasman's Head, we had passed a gigantic rock called the Mew-stone, so christened from a resemblance which it bears to its namesake near Plymouth, not only in its shape but in its fringe of myriads of sea-fowl; also two other rocks, Pedro Blanco and the Eddi-stone. From the latter, indeed, and its sunken reef, we had a narrow escape, having visited it in the night much nearer than was agreeable. As we sailed on to the mouth of the Derwent, the shores closed in upon us by degrees, D'Entrecasteaux's

Channel* and Adventure Bay lay on our left, Cape Raoul and Cape Pillar on the right; at the very entrance of the river were Bruné's, Rabbit, Iron-Pot, and Betsey's Island. At length a pilot came on board, a regular jolly English tar, a novelty to us, as a Ganges pilot would be to you with his leadsman and servant carrying his writing desk. Hobarton was still forty miles up the river, but we were cheered with the hope of reaching it about four in the afternoon; and as we approached within twenty miles, the character of the land began to soften, the barrenness to disappear. The rocks sunk into undulating ground, or rose at times into hills of considerable size, but clothed with richest foliage from the water's edge to their very summits. The river was most beautiful, ever and anon breaking into little bays and creeks, which, being the most sheltered places, had been chosen by the settlers, shewing most inviting bright-coloured pasture and corn-fields in contrast with the dark green foliage around their neat little farms, scattered about, bringing old England and all its dear recollections home to us. And this at the Antipodes! At length, crossing a

* Another entrance to the river, and a very beautiful one, but dangerous from shoals.

little cove on our left, appeared the white houses of Hobarton covering a sloping hill, under a huge black table-mountain. It was picturesque beyond measure. But the extent of the town, and the size of the warehouses, surprised us not a little. It was in the best of spirits that I approached this place; for the fears of finding myself in a strange land were driven away, before we came to anchor. I was expected — nay, welcomed — letters had arrived before; and who should rise out of the second boat which came alongside, but B——t, my old fellow-passenger. It was six o'clock, a cold windy spring evening, but I went to prepare accommodations for my family, and the captain and I enjoyed a thousand English associations as we walked up the High-street — carts and cottages, ships and shops, girls in their pattens, boys playing at marbles; above all, the rosy countenances, and chubby cheeks, and English voices. Every thing new and delightful; but the climax of pleasures awaited us at the end of our walk, a blazing fire, tea, toast, and exquisite butter, at the Macquarie Hotel. We sat for an hour with our feet on the fender, enjoying all this, and when the captain returned to his ship with apples, bread, and news of the accommodations we had secured, I marched

over the way to my friend B——'s precious fireside and family circle.

Stepping in this manner at once from a cold comfortless ship into a comfortable house and society, naturally put me into good humour with the place. The beauty of the scenery, the descriptions of the climate, and the acquaintances we found, induced us soon to land our baggage, and look out for a spot here, in which to sit down for months, instead of going on to Sydney. The settlement of a residence was a matter of no small difficulty. The few empty cottages open to our choice, presented such a contrast to the mansions of India, that much amusement seemed promised by an independent establishment. But servants, a very necessary part, were not to be had; and our own blackies, though three in number, could not undertake the household. Free men find so many means of making money here, that they will not take service, and so the convicts, or, as they are delicately called, the prisoners, supply all demands of this nature; and if the histories of every house were made public, you would shudder. Even in our small menage, our cook has committed murder, our footman burglary, and the housemaid bigamy! But these formidable truths are hushed up, or tried to be so.

The owner of a pretty pigeon-house, commanding a splendid panorama from the top of a high hill behind the town, came temptingly with an offer to board and lodge us all for six months, at the rate of 25*l.* a month. This was *reasonable*, compared with the expensive hotel, but the situation was too bleak for me; moreover, there were nine children, and the house was transparent (literally) against the light, consequently pervious to every wind. A retired military officer next advanced, with a proposal to keep house with him in his beautiful farm, at Newtown, a village, two miles from Hobarton. Here, then, am I, writing at a window, with the best garden in the world, and one of the loveliest of views before me. Every kind of English fruit is hanging from the trees, in luscious abundance. I am preparing to feast on those rarities to an Indian — gooseberries and currants. Our neat well-finished cottage, with complete farm-houses in its rear, stands on the top of one of the lowest hills through which the salt-water river Derwent flows; the garden covers the slope below it; a lagoon, or bay of the river lies in its lap, at the bottom; green hay-fields clothe all the surrounding slopes; neat English houses are scattered upon them; and beyond the river rise the woody and stony

mounts, as yet untouched by the hand of man. These are the beauties that environ me, yet I can give you but a faint idea of the combined landscape that they form. I can remember no English village that surpasses Newtown, and only two or three in Switzerland. All the drives about are of the same kind; and they tell me, the farther inland we go, the more beauty we shall meet. Our gig and horse will carry us hither by-and-by.

These are the pleasant auspices under which we commence the sojourn of this place, which is to restore me to health and strength. There are a thousand local charms which, however, I find I have left no room to mention. Hobarton too, its harbour and vicinity, I must describe in my next letter. This is *long* enough in all conscience, and you may think, heavy enough even, to ballast its six months' voyage hence to you in England. Adieu.

LETTER V.

HOBARTON.

Newtown,
Dec. 1829—*Jan.* 1830.

HAVING this moment come in from an admiring stroll down our valley, along the banks of the beautiful Derwent (a renewal of ancient pleasure that I am just beginning to have strength to enjoy) this sheet of paper caught my eye, dated a month ago, which reminds me of my intention to have then written you a description of Hobarton. I will now fill up its blank pages, and only wish my pen were sufficiently eloquent to describe properly the beautiful scenery which surrounds that town. I dare say you have never dreamt of Van Diemen's Land as of any thing else than a kind of wilderness; an appropriate insular prison for the vagabonds who are sent to it yearly from England. You have never supposed that it has

a beautiful harbour, a fine metropolis, with towns, streets, shops, and pretty shopkeepers, like some of the larger towns of Devonshire or Sussex, or that it consists of an extensive country, already divided into counties, townships, and farms. But it is so—and Englishmen have here successfully shewn what industry can do in seven-and-twenty years. The view from the harbour would make the most magnificent panorama in the world, were a painter to give the deep brown and purple tints to the foliage which clothes these hills; but he should visit the place to form an adequate idea of what is so very different from the pale green verdure of old England. These dark woods form a rich back ground to the town as you view it from the water; they are principally composed of gum-trees, which standing alone, are far from beautiful, being scraggy and bare of foliage below, but when united in groupes, they form a mass of dark leaves enlivened by their white irregular trunks. They are evergreens, or rather everbrowns, which in this clear atmosphere, up the wild glens of Mount Wellington, deepen into the richest purple in the distance. Hobarton is built upon the western bank of the salt water river Derwent, on a creek called Sullivan's Cove, which forms an excellent harbour and an-

chorage for the largest vessels, and possesses the great advantage, that ships can come within a very short distance of the quay to unload. This quay, or jetty, is built out a considerable distance from the shore to a small island on which are two or three large and handsome stone warehouses. The Government House, with its pretty gardens and green slopes, the gothic Court-house just finished, the neat white church seen behind, the jail, in short, most of the principal buildings are seen from the river, the chief part of the town itself being judiciously hid in the valley behind. Above are the gentlemen's houses interspersed amongst the trees, and to the left of them the quadrangle and flag-staff of the barracks. Behind lies a deep valley, from which rises the magnificent Table Mountain, called Mount Wellington. It is about seven miles distant to the west, and 4,000 feet high. The atmosphere is so clear, that unless its sides are gracefully wreathed in clouds, I can distinguish every little ravine and undulation. It is covered with woods to the ledge of rugged rocks which it bears aloft like a mural crown, emblematical of the future prosperity of the infant city! Mount Wellington is the commencement of a long range of hills, which run westward till they meet again the river Derwent, about ten miles off.

Upon a rocky point, forming the eastern side of the harbour, is a little fort called Mulgrave Battery, with a telegraph and signal-post; following the shore is another point, and then the lovely bay called Sandy Bay, about two miles in extent, sheltered from all the cold blasts of the east and south by Mount Nelson, which runs abruptly into the river, closing all further view of the coast on that side. On Mount Nelson is another signal-post, communicating with Mulgrave Battery, and thus announcing to the town the first intelligence of the arrival of any vessels. The ground around Sandy Bay, forming the foot of Mount Nelson, is entirely laid out in gardens, fields, and little farm-houses, supplying Hobarton with plenty of fruit and vegetables, and is altogether a charming spot, combining in one view, hill, water, wood, and cultivation, so unlike the burning climates I have lately quitted, that I could almost fancy myself in Europe again. Continuing my panoramic sketch of the scenery from Mount Nelson, the eye discovers, in a faint grey, the distant islands in the mouth of the river; then the opposite bank, the high land called Clarence Plains, and many an unnamed rugged woody hill, till we come to Kangaroo Point, directly north-east, and facing Hobarton. This is

but two miles across the water, and with a deep bay on either side, and variegated with cottages in the woods which clothe it, it always forms a most pleasing object before us. The back ground rises into hills of a wilder form, as you advance round towards Mount Wellington, whence we first set out. The most considerable in height, and the most remarkable in shape, is Mount Direction, due north, not unlike the Lion's Head, at the Cape of Good Hope.

I have, perhaps, tired you with so long a description, but the scenery is so beautiful, I could not pass it over in silence; and yet what a poor idea of it this mere catalogue of names must convey to you. If I can persuade myself to commence sketching, I must send home some attempts to enable you to judge of a landscape, second only to that of Switzerland.

Hobarton is considerably larger than I had supposed it to be from the river, the principal part being hid, as I mentioned before, by the bank on which the government-house, &c. is built. Its extent is from a mile to a mile and a half square, and the streets are all laid out at right angles. In this instance alone has regularity of plan been adhered to; for nothing can be less uniform than the houses, which present every shape and

size, from the primitive wooden shed, with its outside counter, to the smart London haberdasher's shop, with its glass windows and stone facings, and "Swan," in gold letters, over the door. Originally the houses were built detached, according to the owner's fancy or means: but as the ground becomes more valuable, the spaces between are filling up; rows are even starting up here and there; and two-storied houses, though still a novelty, are becoming less uncommon. This is the case with the principal streets — the Macquarrie and Elizabeth; the former containing most of the public buildings and the houses of official persons, and the latter the best shops. Macquarrie-street and the road continuing from it, a distance of about two miles, runs in a line nearly east and west, over two or three small hills, from the Quay to the Female Penitentiary, and then is lost in a thick woody ravine at the foot of Mount Wellington. The houses are more and more detached, and smaller, as you ride from the town, the richer people advancing, as it were, to the centre of attraction, and leaving their former cottages of two rooms, in the outskirts, to others, to commence the same routine of successful industry. Elizabeth-street crosses Macquarrie-street nearly at right angles, running nearly due north

and south. This is our entrance to Hobarton from Newtown, and I always stop to admire the view from the hill whence the street commences: the diversity of shops, the gay articles they display, the animated healthy population; the government-house, with its plantation of noble trees, forming the point of sight of the street; the rising masts of the vessels, the river, the blue distant hills; together with an indefinable air of freshness and novelty, which proclaims the infant colony, ever give to me a most agreeable subject of contemplation. There are many other good streets daily rising into importance, and very thickly inhabited. I was surprised to find how well the shops are supplied with every description of goods from England, and at how reasonable a price, considering the distance they are brought, being sometimes only one third more than they cost in London. All articles necessary for husbandry are still more moderate.

In 1819 the Gaol-house was the only brick-building; and even five years ago there were but few others, wood being so exceedingly plentiful. Since that time, however, an admirable material for building has been brought into use, — a dark-coloured freestone, which is gradually replacing the wooden tenements, and not only looks

handsomer, but is actually cheaper than brick. The houses are uniformly roofed with wooden shingles, which have exactly the appearance of large slates.

The immediate vicinity of the town is cleared of all trees; for, with the usual hastiness of settlers, not even one, for beauty or for shade, has been spared. Two years ago, the road between Hobarton and Newtown was thick *bush*, as jungle is here termed; now it is completely bare, and fenced in, for different allotments, every one of which has already found a purchaser. Coal has been discovered in many places, and of a very excellent quality; but as yet the inhabitants are compelled by government to use nothing but wood for fuel. The town is well supplied with water from three rivulets, which have their sources in Mount Wellington. Upon them are situated several mills, a tannery, and a distillery. Besides the principal buildings I have already named, there are three chapels—the Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, and Presbyterian; and many schools, which seem well attended. The situation of the Orphan School is extremely beautiful; it is out of the town, on the hill behind the Barracks, looking down upon Sandy Bay on one side, and a deep ravine of Mount Wellington upon the

other, the very spot, of all others, I should have chosen for a house. The members of the Church of England establishment will soon require another building for the accommodation of their increasing population, if one may judge from the overflowing congregations of the present church. Already the service is performed there four times on Sunday; the first time exclusively for the benefit of the convicts who are domestic servants.

With regard to the convicts, about whom it is impossible to speak or to think without feelings of distress, I shall enter more into the description of their state of discipline in another letter. It is strange to be in a country of thieves at all, but still stranger to be there without any fear of having your pocket picked! Such is the admirable arrangement of the present governor. We have found pleasant society here amongst the *government* (for the public consists of a strange medley): many to whom our names are known, but few, I think, whose names are known to you. Colonel Arthur (the governor) and his lady have been very kind; and others particularly so. We have not kept our Christmas, as you have done, upon plum-pudding and mince-pies, for this plain reason — it is in the middle of summer — the season of cherries and gooseberries; yet, as far as fires are

essential to the ceremonies of the times, we might conform, for we can scarcely sit an evening without them. Our summer-days are most uncertain; on Thursday the thermometer was 92°, with a real hot wind; on Friday it was 52°, with rain, and we were glad to have a roasting fire. From season to season, the changes are less extreme. There is little or no snow in winter; the climate is dry, and that is a relief to my constitution, after the mists and rains which seemed to pursue me from Calcutta to Penang, and thence to Sincapore and Batavia. But let those withered Indian frames, which a whistle of the wind almost blows to atoms, beware of Van Diemen's Land, or Tasmania, as it is now called. The breezes here are generally gales; and when they come from the south, which is almost daily, they are more cutting and cold than the easterly puffs we used to dread across Brunswick-square, London. The power of again ranging about the fields, with a book or a pencil, and conversing with nature thus easily, without fear of a burning tropical sun and the lassitude its presence produces, is to me a never-failing source of delight. I can always find some sheltered nook in which to ensconce my thin body, and whence to gaze at the beautiful wild country spread before me; and, in such moments as these,

I could willingly change India for Tasmania, and fall from diplomacy to farming with content, glad to keep my young fry about me.

As a specimen of the manners of the country, I will give you, in my next, an account of a trip we made lately into the interior, as far as New Norfolk. The journal of an invalid at the Antipodes, differs materially in detail of luxurious accommodation from those of your European hypochondriacs, who suffer themselves to be swung in their soft-cushioned carriages along your Macadamized high roads, and then complain of fatigue! You shall soon hear again. Adieu.

LETTER VI.

TRIP TO NEW NORFOLK.

Newtown, January, 1830.

We have well chosen our residence; Newtown is, by far, the prettiest hamlet as well as the nearest to Hobarton. When you have turned the hill at the top of Elizabeth-street, which I have described, you are at once plunged into the interior of a new country. No formal fields, partitioned out by strait rail fences, like those you have left behind. The woods are still in their primitive state; or, if cleared, the green patches exposed seem natural open glades in the forest for the sun to sport in; and the silvery river, every now and then peeping from behind a hill or glistening through the dark trees, is the only animated object in the solitude. The road descends rapidly, and then ascends a

sharp hill, ere coming to the small turning to the right, which through thick plantations of gum and wattle trees, abruptly brings you down the steep hill to Newtown Bay. The hamlet stands, prettily mixed with trees, upon the banks of a small rivulet, which runs into the head of the bay. Newtown Bay is an indent of the river Derwent, which forms thus a succession of little bays on both sides many miles up its course. Between us and Hobarton there is another, called Cornelian Bay: then the harbour itself, otherwise called Sullivan's Cove; and beyond that, Sandy Bay. These add greatly to the beauty of the river, either going up by water, or, as we went the other day to Elizabethtown, by land. It is like a succession of lakes, the bays and promontories on either side, generally being opposed to each other. On the long narrow peninsula between Newtown and Cornelian Bay there is a miserable little wooden building, surrounded with poultry, dignified by the name of Government Farm.

The opposite side of the river is very wild, covered with bush, except in one little green spot in a deep bog, where lies an estate called Risdon, originally fixed on for the site of Hobarton, but abandoned for the present more favourable position. The gardens of all the houses at Newtown

are on the banks of the rivulet; not from the want of springs, if wells were sunk, but from the want of money and hands to do so. The hatchet of the settler has not been so unsparing here, and many shrubs are left from the original bush, beautiful specimens of the produce of the country. Here is the native cherry, which looks more like the arborvitæ, having a red fruit, with the stone outside; the tea-tree (not the tea-tree of China) with leaves like the myrtle, and a very pretty flower; the lilac, some of which I have seen in England; the she-oak or beef wood, a forest tree; and many others, with whose names I am unacquainted. It is an extraordinary fact, that there has not been a fruit or vegetable found in the island which is palatable. The wattle tree,* a species of mimosa, is useful in medicine and tanning, and plantations are made for the sake of the bark, which forms one of the exports.

In my walks I find a great variety of flowers,

* I have ventured to differ from a work on New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, in which the wattle is described as the acacia — the flower and leaves differing essentially from the acacia, and exactly resembling those of the mimosa or sensitive plant. Not understanding botany, I consider it necessary to make this remark.—[*Note by Ed.*]

and only regret I am no botanist to class them. I recognise many old acquaintances — such as the everlastings, the flax, the wild sorrel with a yellow flower, and the orchis; but amongst all these ornaments of the field, I cannot omit mentioning the grasshoppers, which look more like beautiful butterflies than their namesakes in England. Their wings are very large, and formed with a membrane of a bright yellow colour. Our fields, alas! do not boast of the verdure of Old England, for except after a great deal of rain, they are always brown, from this reason, that the indigenous grasses of which the kangaroo grass is the most abundant, grow thinly, and very short. Farmers sow pasture land with English grass and clover for the cattle; the latter flourishes most luxuriantly. A friend who has walked over a great part of the country, assures me it is impossible to judge of the vegetable productions of the island, from the confined neighbourhood round Hobarton. Near Mount Wellington, and clothing the steep sides, the shrubs and flowers are much more beautiful; the flowers especially vying with those of the Cape of Good Hope. It has been observed, that there is a great similarity in the vegetable kingdoms of Tasmania, and the Cape, and all Cape flowers thrive parti-

cularly well when transplanted hither. The geranium, for instance, grows quite as luxuriantly; but at present the ornamental must yield precedence to the useful, and very fortunately for the poor settlers, these latter repay the culture equally well. Grafts of fruit-trees will produce the first year, if allowed; the second year they are ten or twelve feet high, bearing very fine fruit. The best garden in the colony is near this. It belongs to a brewer, who bought the ground about seven years ago. It was then nothing but bush; he soon cleared it, planted a garden, and built a handsome house. He has taken great pains with the former, and to his cultivation and care the colony is indebted for many superior sorts of fruit. His vines also are superseding the vineyard in our garden, which was planted many years before his. From our garden 300 gallons of very tolerable wine were made one year, and the soil appears so favourable, that the time may come, perhaps, when Tasmania will rival the vineyards of France.

This brewer is a favourable instance of the rise of a convict to respectability. He is now, by his good conduct and industry, not only rich, but his family are grown up, and settling respectably. To shew you how the value of land is rising, the farm in which we live, with its garden, and 150

acres of arable and pasture land, was bought the other day for £3,000. Up the country the same sum would buy six or eight thousand acres, part under cultivation.

But I promised you in my last—did I not?—an account of a trip we made to the interior; and I exclaimed against the roads; but here I should say that the present Governor is paying great attention to facilitate communication, and that the process of Macadamization is going on rapidly on the chief roads. Elizabeth Town, a pretty town in the district of New Norfolk, on the banks of the Derwent, twenty-two miles from this, was the point of attraction. We had heard so much of its beauties, that our curiosity was excited, and having persuaded some friends to join us, we set off one fine morning in the best possible spirits. There is something inexpressibly delightful in exploring a new country, and in this instance every feature of it was so totally unlike any thing in Europe or Asia, that the charm was encreased, and provided we fell in with none of the aboriginal inhabitants thereof, we promised ourselves much pleasure. Luckless mortals! we knew not what a counsel of war the clouds were holding against us. I had begun to forget their enmity to me in the dry bright days of Tasmania. Our friends

hired the stage which usually runs between Hobarton and Elizabeth Town three times a-week. You are not to imagine a thing with a bright yellow-and-black body, and red wheels, like your stage coaches in England: this was nothing more nor less than a cart fitted up with benches, like an Irish jaunting-car. Into this our friends packed themselves; we preferred the independence of our gig, but, ere we started, had a good laugh at their whimsical appearance, and not less so at that of the singular method of harnessing two horses to a double shaft, upon the ingenuity of which invention, our driver, it seems, not a little prided himself. We followed the road along the banks of the river, occasionally mounting the high promontories which impede its progress, or at other times skirting the water's edge. We passed a succession of views, only equalled by Switzerland—wood and water, hills and valleys, the solitary houses alone destroyed the illusion, as they were not built in the picturesque form of that country. At eight miles we came to a very pretty ferry, the resort of holiday folk from Hobarton. It is called Roseneath Ferry, and the public-house dignified by the name of an Inn; prospectively, I suppose, as the land is laid out in townships, ere a house is built. Be that as it

may, whatever is the accommodation, the situation is very pretty, and it has an excellent garden. After leaving this ferry the country still wears the same aspect, — thick woods and wild hills on each side of us; on our left, the great range from Mount Wellington westward still continuing. Our road was excessively hilly, and more stony, as our distance from the capital increased. From the ferry we lost sight of the river for about two miles, and crossed a deep sandy tract that is often flooded in the rains, and after climbing another rugged hill with some difficulty, we came suddenly upon the river again, and to the half-way house called the Black Snake. The ridge from Mount Wellington here appears to end, and the Derwent changes its direction: our road up the banks of it had been hitherto north-west; hence to Elizabeth Town it was to the west. The stream is here very wide, making a beautiful bend. The shore directly opposite is flatter, and in high cultivation, but lower down, on the right, between two steep banks of rock and wood, the river Jordan runs into the Derwent. The ferry and boats near it, and the fine hills and woods above, made a beautiful *coup d'œil* from the little inn, the situation of which I was inclined to think more beautiful than any I had yet seen, and this is saying much

in a country abounding in such fine prospects.—A suspension bridge is proposed to be erected here over the Derwent.

Our coachman having harnessed other horses, we started afresh, glad to find our route ran parallel with the river, so that we still enjoyed the views of the other side. The road lay under a high bank, but between us and the water was some rich marsh land, belonging to the governor, which had been drained and brought to yield fine crops. Here our fine weather suddenly forsook us, and as is very common in this country, a complete gale of wind, accompanied by rain, arose, driving full in our faces; at times completely impeding our progress, and obliging us to halt behind the points of the high bank till the gusts of wind had expended their strength. We entered a wilder pass, hills, heaped upon each other; the thick rain makinge very object indistinct; we but descended one steep hill to ascend another: save one quarry of limestone, wood was the uniform character of the country, sometimes so thick as to be impervious to daylight, at other times thinly and beautifully scattered upon green slopes, where herds of cattle were grazing. Here and there the cottage of a poor stock-keeper, but these were so few, they only served to mark the scarcity

of human habitation. Our stage friends, with the advantage of fresh horses, had long before left us to surmount the difficulties of the road as well as we could. At length the church at Elizabeth Town was hailed with no small delight, and I thought we should soon reach it, but again we had to drag over several hills, more steep and stony than ever, and it was with real difficulty we climbed the last, upon which the town is situated. The town did I say! You'll fancy streets, or at least houses, comprised under this descriptive term; so did I; but whilst we again were sheltering ourselves and horse from the pitiless storm under some wattle trees,—I looked in vain for houses. The road ended at the church, no very inviting termination to hungry, cold, and wet travellers. We were expressing our vexation in no very calm terms, when our situation at length attracted a charitable man, who conducted us over the turf to the inn, which really looked very comfortable, and its accommodations within did not belie its external appearance. The inn window faced a splendid rock, clothed in every fissure with luxuriant verdure, which hung over the river. Still I could see nothing of a town, nor even of a village; and no wonder, for, upon inquiring, I found that besides the magistrate's and the governor's, which are at

some little distance, there are but two houses and a half, the third not being completed! making seven in all, including the church and the inn. I forgot to mention the schoolhouse, which here, as well as everywhere else in the colony, is well attended by children who collect from miles around. The governor's farm is extremely pretty and rural; in this hilly country it is indeed impossible to have other than beautiful views up and down the river; and Elizabeth Town is advantageously situated in this respect; the ledge of rocks, hanging over the river, being of a bolder and more perpendicular character than lower down. About two miles above, at a place called Bell's Terrace, these rocks assume a terrific cast; the road is cut in the face of them, as it were, hanging between heaven and earth, with 300 feet of precipice to the water, and no protection between, but the straggling trees down its steep sides, whilst above, the equally precipitous rock crumbles into the pathway, and frequently huge masses, in their descent, threaten destruction to the unwary traveller. Here a ridge of rocks crosses the Derwent, making a little fall on the water, and arresting the tide, which comes up salt as far as this.

A curious fact in the commencing annals of New Norfolk is, that a whale once found its way

up the river, opposite the town, and not being able to turn, was, of course, soon made a prize of by the astonished inhabitants. A gentleman in the neighbourhood immediataly gave them a great sum for it, and hastened down to make the most of his treasure in Hobarton. There he was so long making his bargains, that, behold, on his return he found the small fish, without any respect due to his purchased right in the sea-monster, had made free with his property, and demolished it! This story reminded me of the cargo of ice liquidating in one of your ports while the customhouse officers were debating upon the duty for so unusual a freight.

Excellent fish of all sizes are so abundant in the Derwent, that you can catch them as fast as you can bait the line. I went about six miles further than Elizabeth Town, to see a gentleman on his estate, and passed over Bell's Terrace; I assure you my curiosity is perfectly satisfied by one visit to this terrific pass; I never wish to repeat it till the road is improved. The scenery was indeed superb, especially when a glimpse was caught of the river, which roars like a mountain torrent amidst innumerable rocks and islets. Notwithstanding the rocky character of this part of the country, it is reckoned uncommonly rich by

the agriculturist; and from Bell's Terrace we had a lovely view of farms and fertile plains, in a high state of cultivation. We waited in vain for a fine day, at the pretty inn at Elizabeth Town, but seeing no prospect of a change, we set out on the third day to return home. During our long, wet, and desolate drive, the stories we had heard of the savage aborigines, came in full force upon our minds, and some of our party were fearful of meeting them in the dark hollows of the wild woods. A ray of sunshine would have dispelled these gloomy thoughts, so true it is, they take their complexion from external circumstances. As it was, we amused ourselves and frightened each other by repeating the various cases of depredation lately committed by them on the settlers, sometimes even accompanied with murder and devastation by setting fire to farms and crops. They move in large bodies, with incredible swiftness, forty or fifty miles in one night; and have not long since been seen in the woods at the back of the Black Snake. During the first years of the settlement, these poor naked creatures lived in great harmony with us, came without fear into the white man's house, and soon felt the value of a blanket and other little trifles. In course of time, however, these articles became naturally so coveted by them, that

they commenced thieving; this was resisted, and one or two imprudent timid stock-keepers fired and killed some of the natives. Deadly hatred was in consequence avowed against the whites, which not even all the pictures of explanation our friend F—— has hung up in the woods, depicting the governor punishing the white man for firing at the black, can lessen. Great pains have been taken with those that are caught, to civilize and educate them; but, except learning a few English sentences, it was to little purpose, as they invariably ran back to the woods when an opportunity offered. It is singular that though Van Diemen's Land abounds in such fine rivers, and is surrounded by the sea, the inhabitants should not have advanced even to the construction of the slightest raft; but they are undoubtedly in the lowest possible scale of human nature, both in form and intellect. They have small hollow eyes, broad short noses, with nostrils widely distended, uncommonly large mouths, jaws elongated like the Ourang Outang, and figures scarcely more symmetrical. They are dark, short in stature, with disproportionately thin limbs and shapeless bodies, entirely naked. Add to this, frizzled hair and a most hideous expression of countenance, and you will not wonder at our anxiety to avoid a rencontre

with them and with their formidable spears; a weapon they wield with deadly effect. We had seen six or seven kept as prisoners in Hobarton, they were playing at marbles in their court yard, and though apparently happy, they, notwithstanding, made their escape at the end of three weeks. They threw the spear for our amusement; this is merely a slender stick, nine or ten feet long, sharpened at the heaviest end; they poise it for a few seconds in the hand, till it almost spins, by which means the spear flies with great velocity to the distance of sixty yards, and with unerring aim.

Notwithstanding all our fears, however, we reached home with no further evil than a complete drenching and extreme fatigue, which rendered our warm fireside and dry clothing only the more acceptable. I shall not again risk such another journey until the weather is more favourable, and then I promise myself a tour across the island to Launceston, and shall give a description of the same, if you are not tired with those I have already sent.

LETTER VII.

TRIP TO LAUNCESTON.

Newtown, March 10, 1830.

HERE cometh the infliction I threatened you with of another descriptive tour into the interior, which, if it contained all the untoward incidents we encountered, would, indeed, weary you almost as much as it did ourselves. I shall pass over the constant repetition of stony roads and steep hills, telling you, once for all, that except in the centre of the island, in the neighbourhood of the salt marshes, the whole surface is undulated with ridges of rocky hills, beautiful, indeed, to the traveller in search of the picturesque; but to an invalid like myself, adding greatly to the fatigue of the journey.

Captain Hall talks sensitively of the Corderoy

roads in the woods of North America; my bones still bear equal testimony to the inconvenience of the sharp angles of hard rocks which protrude in the newly-formed roads of Van Diemen's Land. Considering the recent settlement of the colony, in 1803, by Lieutenant Bowen, with a party from Port Jackson, one is astonished that so many tracks should have been made at all. The equal advantages which the south and north possess of being accessible to the sea by means of navigable rivers and estuaries, rendered the settlement of both sides of the country almost simultaneous, and the distance across from the extreme points being only two hundred miles, the space between was soon explored, and estates and townships marked out in the interior, from which roads were early formed.

Unlike most parts of New Holland, Van Diemen's Land is particularly well watered, the rivers from the north and south overlaying each other. The central part is rich land, and possessing also, by means of the rivers, easy communication with the sea. The whole route between Hobarton and Launceston has been located; not a single grant of fresh land is to be had, and we, in our trip, passed no less than seven townships. The distance hence to Launceston is one hundred and twenty-

four miles, and most people make two days' journey of it, but it cost us invalids seven days. On the 21st of February, we started in our gig to go gently the first forty miles, as far as Jericho, where our two friends F—— and G—— proposed joining us to introduce us to their acquaintances on the other side, whose estates it might be interesting to visit. We felt great curiosity to see the style of living in the bush, (to use the local term,) as we had often talked over the matter together, and considered the possibility of our doing the same thing some day, if misfortune or ill health drove us from India. We pursued the same road as in our trip to New Norfolk, as far as a mile above Roseneath Ferry, to Stony Point Ferry, where we crossed the river, and landed upon the ground I mentioned, opposite the Black Snake inn.

A beautiful crop of corn was now standing in sheaves, and the ferryman informed us that this land yielded no less than ninety bushels an acre. The road was scarcely traced here; with some difficulty we descended a steep stony pitch, to the shallow clear stream of the Jordan, over whose rocky bed we passed with some danger to our gig, if not to ourselves; and mounting the other bank, we came upon a farm house, from which we willingly received further directions about our route.

After tumbling and rolling over numberless ruts and stones, and hills, for five miles more, we joined the main road from Roseneath Ferry, anticipating, most erroneously as it proved, some amendment from this junction. A little way on, we came to the town of Brighton, as yet composed only of the ale-house, and a few sheds—at least this was all within sight; but with such a want of dwellings, it was curious to see such an extent of cultivated ground. We then passed over a small rise, called Cornelian Hill, alternately hard rock, or deep sand. This hill receives its name from the quantity of cornelian stones found upon it, and some of which are extremely beautiful. I believe I have not mentioned that these abound in many parts of the country. Bagdad, a miserable inn, that looked as if the next storm would with ease upset the frail wooden construction, was our first halting place, after sixteen miles' drive. For provisions we found but mouldy bread, and salt pork; and, for amusement, the endeavouring to act as peace-makers between the landlord and a party of drunken reapers. We proceeded eight miles farther, passing several neat houses and farms, less thinly scattered, till we came to the Swan Inn, at the foot of Constitution Hill, where we passed the night. We had no-

thing to complain of in the accommodations of this house, excepting one evil, I fear, incurable. Whether the new wood, of which the houses in the colony are built, is the cause, I know not, but they are infested with bugs; and in the Swan Inn more abundantly than usual, and of an uncommon size. Perhaps they were increased by the vicinity of the house to the overhanging wood of Constitution Hill.

We began our journey next morning about nine o'clock; the horse seemed an old traveller, and perfectly aware of the arduous toil he had to undergo. The road wound at first in a zigzag, gently amongst the trees; the waggons, which were before us, drawn by teams of oxen, urged by the shouts of the drivers, enlivened the scene; great branches and trees were lying in thick confusion about the road, so as almost to intercept our progress; on one side a deep woody ravine, with peeps of woody hills beyond. In this way we toiled up for a mile and a half to the summit, on the level of which the road runs two miles and a half, and allowing another for the descent, we travelled in all not less than five miles in crossing the hill. As we descended, the ravine spread into a pretty little valley of fields, in which was a scattered village, called the Green Ponds. Here, at the twenty

ninth milestone, measured from Hobarton, twenty-seven from New-town, was another capital inn, but we had no time to stop. This valley is about seven miles in extent, the whole well cultivated; part of it is called the Cross Marsh, where there is a fine estate belonging to Mr. Kemp, the principal merchant of Hobarton. At the back of his estate rise hills, like downs, naturally bare of trees, and clothed with excellent pasture for sheep, with which their sides were covered. The Jordan meanders below, on the banks of which all the farm-houses are situated, and between us and them rich fields of corn and grain stood ready for the reaper. The uncultivated parts of this valley were over-run with wattle-trees, the species of mimosa above-mentioned, making even these sandy tracts valuable. We next crossed the hills, which bounded the valley, and came to a most *unlovely* spot, called Lovely Banks; we thought it still worse, probably from our finding little at the wretched public-house, to satisfy our hunger, or that of our horse. From this a wild hilly tract of pasture country extends for eight miles, with no trace of human habitation.

Looking back from the highest hill, Spring Hill, on which is the fortieth mile-stone, we had a fine view of the whole western range from Mount

Wellington; and of the eastern range from Mount Direction. Before us, to the north, the elevated plain of Jericho. This looked dreary enough, being but partially cultivated, and as usual, in the whole township, but two or three houses visible, which gazed at each other at the respectful distance of a mile or two. The Inn, however, answered its good fame, and here I was glad to rest a whole day. You may laugh at this idea, but I was completely knocked up with the fatigue of flogging the horse through the heat of the sun. It was, unfortunately, a bad place for obtaining either information or amusement, the fields were ploughed up, and most part of the woods in view were dead. From hence a road branches off to the east coast, to Oyster Bay, where are many farms and grants. A little below Oyster Bay, near the coast, is Maria Island, which affords scenery of the most romantic description: in the centre it is divided by a narrow sandy isthmus, the sea nearly meeting on each side. The land at each extremity is very high, at the northern there is a magnificent mountain terminating in two immense rocks, projecting one above the other, formed of petrified shells, and called the Bishop and Clerk, 3,000 feet high: the base is washed by the sea.

A settlement was attempted on the island, for manufacturing woollen cloths for the use of the prisoners, but is, I believe, discontinued. A large portion of the island is excellent land, and loaded with wood. It is about fifteen miles long, and ten broad at the widest part.

Our friends joined us on the 24th at Jericho, and we resumed our journey. We had a pleasant drive over the succeeding plains, where the trees, principally gum, are thinly scattered, or standing in park-like groups. We were much amused with the chattering of magpies, which abound here. Their whistleing is not unmusical, and when tamed, they are taught tunes easily. I know not whether I ever mentioned a most sagacious and entertaining one in our garden at Newtown, who is almost as good a guard as a dog. Eight miles from Jericho, fifty from Hobarton, we came to the pretty military depôt called Oatlands, where the neat stone cottages of the officers, and the barracks of the men made a pretty contrast to the rambling farm-houses we had so generally met with. From Oatlands, there are two roads to Launceston, we made choice of the new one to the left: we soon came to the great range of hills which divide the waters that run north and south, and crossed them by St. Peter's Pass, which avoids the steep-

est part of the hill. It was, nevertheless, long and tedious enough, and we had thought it necessary to provide ourselves with guns against any attacks of bush-rangers, or natives, who are easily concealed in these dark woods, and dart out upon the unconscious traveller. Here I first discovered the reason why, at the bottom of the steep hills, we had invariably found the road encumbered with great limbs and trunks of trees. They are fastened on behind the carts and waggons descending, instead of a drag-chain to the wheel, and then they are flung away carelessly, regardless of those who are to pass afterwards. After this fatiguing hill, which is ten miles long, we were glad to rest at the pretty house and garden of the magistrate, Mr. Harrison, in Maxwell parish. He has a capital farm, and said that the land about him was uncommonly fertile, but that they were greatly annoyed by the depredations of the wild cat, called the tiger of the island, and by those of another animal, called by the settlers, the devil, both of which carry off lambs and poultry. The devil is an animal about three feet long, with thin black hair, a head like a pig, and a most formidable jaw, armed with strong teeth. At Mr. Harrison's we met another party of travellers, who were conveying a young lady to a famous boarding-school,

about five miles off, kept by a Mrs. Clark. Who would have thought of finding such an establishment in the bush!

Having passed over the dividing range of hills, the land assumed a much flatter appearance: we were approaching the great central plain, an expanse of ten or twelve miles in diameter, called the Salt Pan Plains, from two large salt marshes, the one of forty acres, and the other, the best of the two, of twenty acres in extent. The new road was here unfinished, and our friends who undertook to guide us, lost their way, so that we made a detour of six miles to gain the old road from Oatlands. In winter these marshes are full of rain-water, which is dried up in summer, when they become incrusted with excellent salt, from a quarter to about half an inch thick, presenting a surface as white as snow, and fit for any culinary purpose. The grazing land in this plain is reckoned the very best in the island, both cattle and sheep thriving particularly well upon this grass, which is impregnated with the saline qualities of the soil. At Ross, seventy-four miles from Hobarton, we halted for the night, heartily tired; it is situated upon the Macquarie River; a few scattered houses compose it, though it is a military station, and a detachment is always quar-

tered there it is likewise distinguished by a race-course, where annual races are held. After the variety of views we had seen amongst the hills, we began to tire of the sameness of the plain, and were glad, at Campbell-town, to catch again the sight of a long range to the east, ending in a point called Ben Lomond. Campbell-town looked pretty with its long narrow bridge, or rather causeway, two hundred yards in length, over the Elizabeth River. It has a prosperous appearance, many good-sized houses, a court-house and jail being already built; it is eighty-two miles from Hobarton. Our horse having been down on his knees twice the day before, in consequence of the long hills, and very bad roads, ourselves much fatigued, and a very long stage before us, we thought it best to stop here for the night. The next morning the animal still looked in such an unsafe condition to draw our gig, that G—— gave us his instead, with the assurance that it would bring us on better; we exchanged accordingly, and he rode off on our grey in another direction to Westbury. Our new acquisition, however, feeling either frightened or overloaded with our gig, stopped short one hundred yards from the Inn, in a pool of sand, and nothing could move him. I ran back for assistance, and re-

turned with the hostler, armed with a fork by way of spur, but even this, formidable as it looked, would not succeed; we sent hastily after F——, who had preceded us about two miles, and holding a council on his return, we decided on the only remedy left, viz., to change horses with him; his had never been in harness, but was a tractable animal, and we got on well enough as long as his master was immediately before him, but if F—— ventured out of the road, either to the right or to the left, the old horse was sure to follow spite of whip or rein.

This stage, as we were told, was very long and dismal; the first ten miles, consisting of a sandy, hilly, woody tract, called Epping Forest, part of which was dead, were quite unlocated; we then came to the bank of the South Esk, and again overlooked a fertile country, in which are some of the most improved estates. We stopped for refreshments at a settler's, upon the borders of the forest. He had been a farmer in Suffolk, and seemed to have been used to a better life; but calamities had determined him to emigrate. He came hither with six sons, for two of whom he has obtained situations; and with the four youngest he cultivates his farm. He was building his house of plank and mud, something

like Robinson Crusoe's, but extremely neat and nicely thatched. Two rooms were sufficient for the family, and, though only half of the roof was finished, it looked clean and comfortable; he had not been here many months, but felt so confident in his prospect of success, that he had sent for his wife and six daughters to join him. We sat down to dinner with them, the lads having first cooked the meal; we were glad to meet with a family in the woods so circumstanced, and listened to the old man's history with pleasure.

After leaving this hospitable dwelling we passed by the edge of a morass, under a bank which we ascended, to a farm called the Snake Banks, Mr. Gibson's, where was the most splendid view that we saw the whole journey, comprising the whole range of country to the eastern hills, which now appeared in such distinct outline, that we could count the jagged peaks of the crest of Ben Lomond, beyond which the country is unexplored. Below us was an estate which had the appearance of a beautifully planted park, backed by superb woods. These belonged partly to Mr. Gibson, and partly to Mr. Cox, from the latter of whom we intended to solicit a lodging for that night. After crossing the boundary of Clarendon (Mr. Cox's estate) we had still four miles to traverse ere coming to the

inner inclosure. On reaching this we thought our long day's journey of troubles would be at an end; no such thing: we again lost our way through a swamp, crossed a ditch, got entangled in the bushes, and extricating ourselves with difficulty, again arrived at the brink of the South Esk, whence we discovered the house, like a fairy castle, perched on a high bank on the opposite side. We were luckily within reach of assistance, and four men came immediately to help us; and with much coaxing and persuasion, F——'s old horse at last dragged us through the river and up its steep bank.

We received a most hospitable welcome; the house was one of the best we had entered — all on one floor, as usual — but the owner had added to it considerably as his family increased. There were not only rooms in plenty for them, but spare ones for guests, who, in this unfrequented part, are always received and entertained without introduction. There was much to be seen on this estate; the store-house, barns, and stables, were very complete. I was much struck with one substantial barn, built with whole trunks of trees. Mr. Cox has a famous breed of cart horses, and possesses the celebrated Flemish draught horse called Black Jack, one of the noblest animals I ever saw, magnificent in size and strength. Wine,

cheese, beer, and almost every article of household consumption is made at home, and the garden evidently shewed the master's care.

The next morning we again set forward on our journey, having only seventeen miles to Launceston; and, as we were promised an excellent road, we anticipated an easy drive, which it would have been, but for the obstinacy of G——'s horse, which we again tried. This animal either ran with all his speed, or made a dead stop; and having performed five such races, and got over seven miles in half an hour, he planted himself resolutely at the bottom of a hill. F—— good-naturedly again changed with us, and once more enabled us to proceed. The hills we were now traversing were not so wild looking as those of the Derwent. We saw below us the very pretty village of Perth, on the South Esk, through which the high-road passes, and which we afterwards joined. We were approaching the north side, *alias* the sunny side, of the island, where it is sheltered from the bleak winds of the south. Two rivers, the North and South Esk, meet just below Launceston, and form the broad and deep river called the Tamar, forty miles from Bass's Straits. We saw them from the heights meandering through the plain. Launceston is situated within the fork thus formed, and

almost equals its rival, Hobarton, in beauty, but for the want of the broad spreading Derwent, and the same number of substantial edifices. As you descend the hill towards it, your eye is arrested by a high rocky bank, to the west, covered with trees. Four large brigs were lying in the South Esk, giving evidence of the traffic of the place, though from the scattered wooden cottages which composed the principal part of the town, one would hardly have guessed its commercial importance. Farmers on this side of the island ship all their wool from hence, in preference to Hobarton. Large brick store-houses seemed the principal public buildings — what they called the government house, being merely a large cottage prettily situated in an excellent garden. The church was just finished.

A mile above Launceston, the South Esk forms a beautiful cascade through a deep chasm of rocks, where the inhabitants go for fresh water, the salt tide running up to the pool below. Above the cataract is a large bason, surrounded with steep hills. A bathing place has been already established nearer the mouth of the Tamar, called George Town, the fashionable resort of the ladies of Launceston and the neighbourhood. G— joined us here from his excursion, and we were right

glad to have our old sober grey horse again ere we commenced our tour westward through the woods to C——'s estate. There were so many waggon tracks up the hills that it was puzzling to distinguish which was the right one. As if to remind one of the lawless state of the country we were about to enter, the first public house we passed on the top of the hill behind Launceston, had been only the night before the scene of shooting a noted bush-ranger, who, with an accomplice, had laid a scheme of plundering the house and murdering the owner. We were shown the very tree behind which he concealed himself; and after the first horror at the transaction had subsided, need I say, we had rather a comfortable feeling that the fellow was no longer alive to molest us. We passed many fences, which shewed us the land was appropriated; else from the denseness of the woods we should have supposed the black cockatoos we saw in great numbers, had the sole right of possession. The bushes and broken trees so incumbered the path, that my wife preferred walking most of the way. We forded the Western River, passed Mr. Raby's farm, and six miles beyond reached Mr. Ashburner's estate, part of whose woods had been lately burnt, preparatory to clearing, and were still hot. Mr. Ashburner has had his

grant only about three years, and we could scarcely believe that the little mud cottage, at which we were invited to alight, could be his residence; it nevertheless contained his wife and children, and they kindly offered the use of it to us as long as we stayed to survey C——'s estate. It was curious to see this specimen of a prudent settler's residence until his means increased to enable him to build a better house. Even this is improved since Mrs. A—— and the children arrived in the bullock cart, which, in the gipsy style, afforded them shelter night and day, during their journey from Hobarton. The cottage is of wood, plastered with mud, and at present contains four rooms,—a sitting room, a bed-room for themselves, a nursery, and a spare room for travellers. The ceilings were composed of planks laid across the tops of the rooms, thus seasoning for the new house. The sitting room was the only one plastered, but every thing within looked so clean and so comfortable that we should willingly have stayed longer than one day, had not circumstances called us homewards. I drove over to C——'s estate, the Adelphi, which is quite in its infancy, the outer fence not yet completed.

To prevent disputes in property, and to keep the cattle from straying, every settler is compelled, under pain of forfeiture, to fence his ground the first year. This costs little more than the labour

of the work people; at Hobarton it is from four to eight shillings a rod. At Adelphi there was a crop of wheat standing, and gram, a pulse on which cattle and horses are fed in India, had been sown with great success; one root had covered a space of three feet square. The buildings were as yet mere shelter for the men and horses.

Of all C—'s investments none have succeeded so well as his horses. Two or three old Arabs he sent down from Bengal, and for which he gave a trifle, sold as breeders, for 400*l.* a-piece; and Tom Jones lets out at 350*l.* a-year. Mr. Ashburner has done wonders on his grant, considering his short possession of three years: he begins to feel repaid for the vast labour and anxiety of its commencement. The cottage was already surrounded with a kitchen garden, producing sufficient vegetables for the family, and beyond were fields in full crop; it might be compared to an island in the woods. He brought in an average ear of corn, measuring eight inches long. This was the extent of our journey, but not that of the locations, which stretch considerably farther to the north-west. I believe two-thirds of the island still remain unexplored, * the greater part to the west.

* Since this was written, Mr. Sherland has made his way across from Hobarton to the western coast.—[*Note by Ed.*]

Our host kindly undertook to pilot us to the edge of the Norfolk plains. We carried away in our gig a little tame kangaroo, from Adelphi; it was the only one we saw during our journey; they retreat into the woods as fast as the country is located, to the delight of the settler, who is by no means anxious to see them near his corn-fields. The emus are equally rapacious, but they are very rare indeed. We saw some eagles in this part of the country, and white cockatoos in such numbers as to cover whole fields; these last are very destructive, and will soon grub up acres of wheat or turnips. Parroquets of the most beautiful colours fly about everywhere, as sparrows in England, and thousands of small birds, with bright plumage, but few songsters. The laughing jack-ass we had often heard before at Newtown; it is a large bird, and really laughs admirably. An extraordinary animal is common on the banks of rivers and in lagoons, of which you may have heard, combining the species of quadrupeds and birds; it is called the Platibas, or Platibus. It is twenty inches long, has a bill like that of a duck, legs short and spread out like those of a tortoise· in males, a cock's spur upon the hind ones; feet which are webbed with a strong membrane, so constructed that the creature can at pleasure ex-

tend them considerably beyond the claws; the body is covered with short and long hair, the latter is flattened, and has the appearance of small feathers. I have requested several people to send me one of these curious animals, but have not yet succeeded in getting one; it is difficult to catch them, and they are rare in the neighbourhood of Hobarton.

We went across the country, southward, to see the estates belonging the Messrs. Archers, near Norfolk Plains, intending to join the Hobarton road at Campbell Town. These plains are almost entirely cultivated, being well watered by the South Esk, the Western River, or, as it is now called, the Meander, the Lake River, and other tributary streams. It is divided out into a great many small farms, the land being much coveted, and was originally settled by emigrants from Norfolk Island. The size of the wattle shrub was an evidence of the richness of the soil: they here grow into considerable trees. I observed, also, a shrub very much like our myrtle. The large grant of the Van Diemen's Land Establishment is near these plains. At the beautiful farm of Woolmers, belonging to Mr. T. Archer, we crossed the Lake River in his ferry-boat, and entered his estate. There are three brothers of

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this name, whose estates join; they are very extensive, and reckoned the finest in the colony. It was like driving through a park: hills, whose sloping sides were studded with trees; and the Lake River watering the plain below.

Pensanger, Mr. J. Archer's, is beautifully situated on a little hill, by the side of the river. Mr. A. was extremely proud of his estate, and justly so; he had large nurseries of English trees, such as oaks, ashes, acacias, firs, elms, &c., which promised to thrive well. The estate consisted of 12,000 acres. This was now too small for his sheep; but being surrounded on all sides by other locations, he was unable to extend it. We saw a fine flock of a thousand sheep feeding near the house, each of which he estimated at the average value of 15*l.*; but, to me, the sight of thirty or forty beautiful mares and colts, galloping about, was more gratifying. Here I saw C——'s beautiful horse *Tom Jones*, a silk-white Arab, with black points.

The view from the house at Pensanger was a complete panorama: the sweeping valley, and winding river, in the foreground; the various forms of the well-wooded hills; and, in the distance, the blue western range, on one side; and the Humocky Hills to the east on the other. We could not

remain here longer than one night, though Mr. Archer promised us much amusement and interest, if we would. We quitted him with regret, and set off with threatening clouds, which soon dissolved into pouring rain, and continued without intermission the whole day. Mr. Archer accompanied us for six or eight miles across his domain, over thick grass, till he thought we could find our way. We missed it, however, two miles after he left, notwithstanding that F—— was with us, the thick rain had made every object so indistinct. We stopped at a farm for shelter, and to dry ourselves, hoping the rain would abate; but as it did not, were obliged to continue. We were now skirting the east of Epping Forest, and should we take the wrong direction, might have to pass the night in the wood. F——, who had travelled the road before, pioneered us, but even he lost the right track three times, and never shall I forget the route we made, guided by F——'s pocket compass, through sands, over hills and rocks, and into holes, to say nothing of our fears lest we should break down by the way. After an immense circuit, we reached Campbell Town, most dreadfully fatigued.

Nothing but necessity would have made me proceed the next day to Ross. Hence we re-

turned to Newtown alone. Our gig was in a most shattered condition; at Mrs. Ransom's Inn, at the Cross-Marsh, it was completely done for: we there availed ourselves of a gig which a gentleman wished to be returned to Hobarton. Our disasters seemed to accumulate: as ill-luck would have it, we took the road to the Roseneath Ferry, which was very much longer and more hilly than that to the Stony Point Ferry, adding five miles to our day's work. The vale of the Derwent looked still more beautiful to us after our temporary absence; and I doubt whether this scenery, being infinitely more romantic, does not exceed any other part we had visited.

I have made a promise to make no more such fatiguing journeys, not even for the pleasure of inflicting, or rather afflicting, you with their description. Adieu.

LETTER VIII.

HOBARTON.

March 15th, 1830.

My dear Henry still finds me in this land of regenerated thieves, where we are gathering autumn fruits, (wretched things by the way) whilst you are beginning to thaw under a spring sun. We are on the wing, however, I not daring yet to trust myself to the bleak gales of winter. Our luggage is all conveyed on board the Medway; we have finally quitted our pretty abode at Newtown, and are in the Macquarie Hotel, preparatory to sailing. Ere I leave the place I will write down a few cursory remarks and observations I have made during my residence here. I regret much that my health, and other circumstances, disabled me from prolonging my visits to the different estates

up the country, as there is much to be learnt from a practical view of the methods pursued in bringing a new tract of land under cultivation. C—— has shewed his sagacity in pitching upon this colony as the locale of his pecuniary investments.

The sources of accumulation here have engrossed my attention completely, and the island possesses temptations, in my eye, even above the glorious power, to be obtained in our East India civil service. See how I am changed! Romance, and even ambition, have vanished; for amongst all the beauties, and interests of this place, I am beginning to think none are so beautiful as the interests of capital. The colony contains valuable property, many sources of wealth, security, health, every thing but money, consequently the latter obtains a most profitable return. Interest alone on mortgages, with the very best securities, is at fifteen or twenty per cent. Invest your money in stock for wool, and it brings a return of fifty per cent. per annum—in the whale fishery one hundred per cent. There are two banks founded upon joint-stocks, and the shareholders are the wealthiest people in the community; dividends now paid are sixteen per cent., the shares 100*l.*; the banks are constituted upon the safest possible principle—the business is almost confined to dis-

counting bills—security is insisted on, and mortgages declined, lest land should be obtained instead of money. The quarter of the globe in which all these profits are to be safely made is so little known, that capital has not been drawn to it. As a certain sign of the attractiveness of this place, notwithstanding that Calcutta is now rousing all our wishes to return, we have almost come to a determination, that it will be preferable to come hither three or four years hence, with a little money, than to stay, and dare disease and death in Bengal; indeed, there are here so many advantages, that were any calamity to fall upon any of our hitherto lucky family, the sufferers might still have a chance of happiness, and plenty, by coming to Van Diemen's Land. I shall endeavour to take advantage of what I know concerning this place for this express object. Conceive what fifteen years' accumulation, at fifteen per cent., would add to our fortune. Were you a poor man, I could not recommend to you a better mode of creating a fortune for your children than on their birth, to send out 100*l.* or 200*l.*, to be invested here in building-land, sheep, cattle, bank-stock, or whale fishery shares—but you are rich. Great communication with India will soon be brought about, to the benefit of the colony, and I am glad

to have been one of its first visitors. I should not be much surprised if I pay this place another visit within two years; and if I do, I will make the most of it, so help me, dollars and rupees! I have only to bring down a broken-winded done-up Arab, or two, and their prices, as colonial breeders, will pay my current expenses, whilst the little money I may have may all be laid out. In making such investments, the two great points to be observed are obviously the security of the property, and the simplicity of its management; the agriculturist is sure of a market as long as this country is growing, and the seasons of Sydney so uncertain. Whilst the rate of profits on capital continue so high, there is no doubt of population being encouraged, and wealth encreasing; and as long as the increase of population keeps pace with the increase of capital, the rate of profits will not fall.

From these few remarks I deduce the certain inference that there is no immediate prospect of any check to that rise in the value of land, and such other property, which is now observable. Money well invested in land here, and allowed to accumulate, will be tenfold its original value in fifteen years. Two hundred pounds would purchase a noble property here, in England the inte-

rest on it would scarcely furnish two boxes of millinery annually! You have no idea of the cheapness of things here; 1,000*l.* will buy a fine, healthy, and beautiful estate of 1,200 acres, 200 of them already in cultivation, and the whole becoming more valuable every year. Corn and potatoes export to Sydney, wool to England. Wool averages six-pence a pound; the whole colony is on the advance, and its resources remain to be developed.* Fresh lands are granted in square miles, in the proportion of one square mile, or 640 acres for every 500*l.* sterling of capital, which the applicant can immediately command to the extent of four square miles, or 2,560 acres, which is the largest grant that is made to any settler without purchase, as the smallest is 320 acres. The total territory in acres is 15,000,000, of which about one-half is rocky, or thickly wooded, the rest arable and pasture; arable being, as one to six of pasture. Total acres granted to December, 1829, 1,323,553, consequently unlocated acres, 13,676,447. The wool of Van

* Ploughs dragged by bullocks take three days to an acre; 5*s.* the average cost of producing a bushel of wheat; fencing costs from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 8*s.* per rod. Upwards of six hundred miles of substantial post and rail fencing has been put up in the colony.

Diemen's Land is of peculiar softness, and from the greater attention now paid to cleaning and packing, the price is rising. Wheat is of a very superior quality, weighing generally about sixty, and sometimes as much as sixty-five pounds a bushel. Oats are beginning to be raised, barley has not yet succeeded, peas and other species of pulse are plentiful. Skins are also valuable. Seal-skins the most so, being worth about twenty-five shillings each in England. Kangaroo-skins are essentially useful in the colony, for hats, and also for shoes, which are remarkably durable; when well packed, and of a good size, these skins fetch nearly sixpence a pound in London. Shoemakers make 100 per cent on the raw material.

I have mentioned already how luxuriantly fruits and vegetables grow with ordinary attention in almost every part of the island, a plentiful supply of the most useful vegetables may be provided all the year round; such is the general climate even about Hobarton, which is on the most exposed side, that green peas may always be had for the table from the open ground. The growth of fruit-trees is so rapid, as to astonish a stranger; many settlers who have not been more than five or six years in the colony, have now gardens from

three to six acres in extent, in which the fruit-trees are so large as to give them the appearance of orchards.* To all these sources of wealth and comfort the convict population contribute instead of interrupting, for they supply us with the only labour to be had. Independence can grow rich in so many ways, that no one will hire himself for labour unless obliged, and thanks to the skill of our Governor, Colonel Arthur, the rascals are kept under perfect subjection by means of a tread-mill, and good beef and pudding. The bush, (*alias* jungle) ten years ago, was full of escaped villains, who sucked the blood of both men and cattle, until an effective system of police cut off their heads, and overawed the refractory members who remain in chains. There are comparatively now few complaints, and no disturbances. The offence for which they are transported is never made known, unless by themselves; an account is kept, during the passage, of their conduct, and each individual is recommended to service accordingly. After five or seven years, if they behave

* The present average price of meat is, for good beef, 7*d.* the pound; mutton, 6*d.*; fowls are 3*s.* a pair; turkey or goose, 9*s.*; butter is 1*s.* 6*d.* the pound; tea to be had at 2*s.* 6*d.*; brown sugar at 3*d.*; best potatoes at 10*l.* per ton; second sort, 6*l.* ditto; wheat, 8*d.* per bushel.

well, a ticket of leave is given them, which enables them to keep a shop, or enter into any other concern for their own livelihood ; thus every encouragement is held out to improvement, whilst on the other hand, very strict rules are laid down, to which obedience is enforced. The masters of assigned servants are equally obliged to conform to these regulations, under pain of forfeiting the *indulgence* of having these servants, for such it is justly considered.

Upon the complaint of the master, the convicts are punished for ill conduct, in proportion to their offence, either by means of the tread-mill, or by confinement in a jail set apart for the purpose, and sent to work upon the roads, wearing a black-and-yellow dress, and chained and guarded by sentries ; this is of course confined to the men. About 120 form the chain gang, who are always at work in and about Hobarton, this gang is divided into two classes, separated according to their behaviour. About 350 are employed throughout the colony. The parallel punishment for the women is the yellow dress, solitary confinement, and having their hair cut off. They are, generally speaking, a still lower grade of beings than the men. I pity the ladies much who are under the necessity of admitting such degraded creatures into their do-

mestic establishments, but there is no choice. Such is the mistrust in their characters, that they are not allowed to go from one house to another without a guard. There are separate houses of correction for each sex, and the same at Launceston. No convict servant can be discharged except by an order of a magistrate. A certain quantity of yearly clothing must be given, but no money on any pretence. The annual expence of a convict servant, clothes and all included, I heard estimated at from 20*l.* to 25*l.*

You may judge, from this, how useless it is to bring out servants from England, even if they would remain with you, which you may be sure they will not. The lowest wages for a free servant here is 24*l.*, the food, besides, is to be calculated. The prevailing vice is drunkenness, which, in Hobarton, is rather encouraged than repressed, by the extraordinary number of spirit-shops. As a specimen, from October 1, 1829, fifty publicans in Hobarton, and sixty-seven in the country, received licenses for the ensuing year. But up the country, away from this temptation, and under a strict, though not severe, master, they often turn out well, and redeem their place in society. The boys are reckoned the most irreclaimable; and so little anxious are masters to have them, that an

order has been made, compelling the taking of one boy to a certain proportion of men.

Hobarton, the capital, is increasing in extent with amazing rapidity; and as it stands on the only excellent harbour, there is no doubt of its continuing unrivalled. The ground in the neighbourhood is proportionably rising in value. To give you an idea of this, I am just now in treaty for 100*l.* worth of land, which, six years ago, sold for 4*l.* per acre, and is now valued at 40*l.* Adjoining to houses in Hobarton, land sells at 300*l.* per acre; my purchase is not a quarter of a mile off. The city will spread there in five years, and then it will be worth 750*l.* There are spots of land, within the town, actually worth 2000*l.* per acre.

A regular communication with India is now in progress of establishment, which will bring down a constant supply of invalid visiters from thence, to recruit in this most salubrious of climates;*

* During one hundred and thirty days that I kept a meteorological journal, from October 16th to February 23d—

Rainy days	42
Strong wind	24
Fine and pleasant	28
Very fine	29
Wind too hot	7

Hottest day, 25th January, thermometer 99½ in the shade.
Coldest day, 16th October, thermometer 56°.

and positively there are no houses to put them into. This will raise the value of building-land, and of house-rent, which is already high.

Have no fears that the western colony at Swan-River will eat up this; she *will* flourish, in spite of present impediments; but *this* must be the country to supply her with grain, potatoes, and other useful articles.

I wish we could have gone there and seen the first arrivals, floundering in the mud and sand! To think you have all been led astray so far as to suppose the land of Canning River the most fertile in the world — and why? Because it had no trees! We had, at first, most alarming accounts of the thousands disappointed; but these were extravagant, and we may conclude that they would have done very well, had not the settlers brought their families with them ere any habitation had been made to shelter them. After considerable expense has been incurred, I have no doubt the colony will flourish, though I suspect the opposing circumstances will interfere much. The fact of there being no convicts is greatly against the rapidity of its rise, instead of being, as supposed, in its favour. Crews thrown together on an uninhabited shore, have a natural propensity to consider themselves all equal, as they may take

equal possession. In such a case, the capitalist has no advantage over the husbandman; his money is of no use; and all must labour alike. No man will willingly labour for another, when, by labouring for himself, he may found an estate. But convicts are labourers by compulsion, who do the drudgery for us. Instead of fearing these importations of thieves, these colonies are daily calling out for—"More, more!" They are the only servants, the only hands, that save the bodies of money holders, and to their assistance alone may be attributed the astonishing progress of New South Wales. In 1819 the population here (Van Diemen's Land) was 5,000: it is now (1830) 24,000, of which 12,000 are convicts. The total number of native inhabitants is only reckoned at 600, so that they may easily be kept in restraint, if no amicable terms can be arranged. There are many orders and notices, enjoining kind treatment of them, declaratory of the law being equal with regard to violence offered to them, as to a colonist; but it is to be feared they will not be made to comprehend these kind intentions.

The society of Hobarton is very pleasant, and to us has been very kind; but the chief amusement to strangers is the constitution of this society. The population of the future empire of Van Die-

men's Land (for in fifty years it must be independent,) is founded upon the dregs that have been drained from England. Most of our new friends have sprung from the lowest democracy. Their mother language will soon undergo a change: the next generation will certainly expel the *h* from its place in the dictionary, and admit it as a h'aspirite, to the h'apples, and the h'oranges.

A little more respectability may perhaps be imported from England or from India, when the advantages this colony holds out to emigrants are better known;* and from the great attention paid every where to the education of the children, I augur well of the hopes of the next generation, and of the feelings of the present. In such hopes and feelings let us participate, and with the most earnest wish that they may all be fulfilled, we take our leave of the beautiful Island of Tasmania.

* Chinese labourers, to the amount of two or three hundred, have lately been taken to Van Diemen's Land, and are likely to prove a most useful addition to the working classes there. They are the most ingenious artisans in the world.

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